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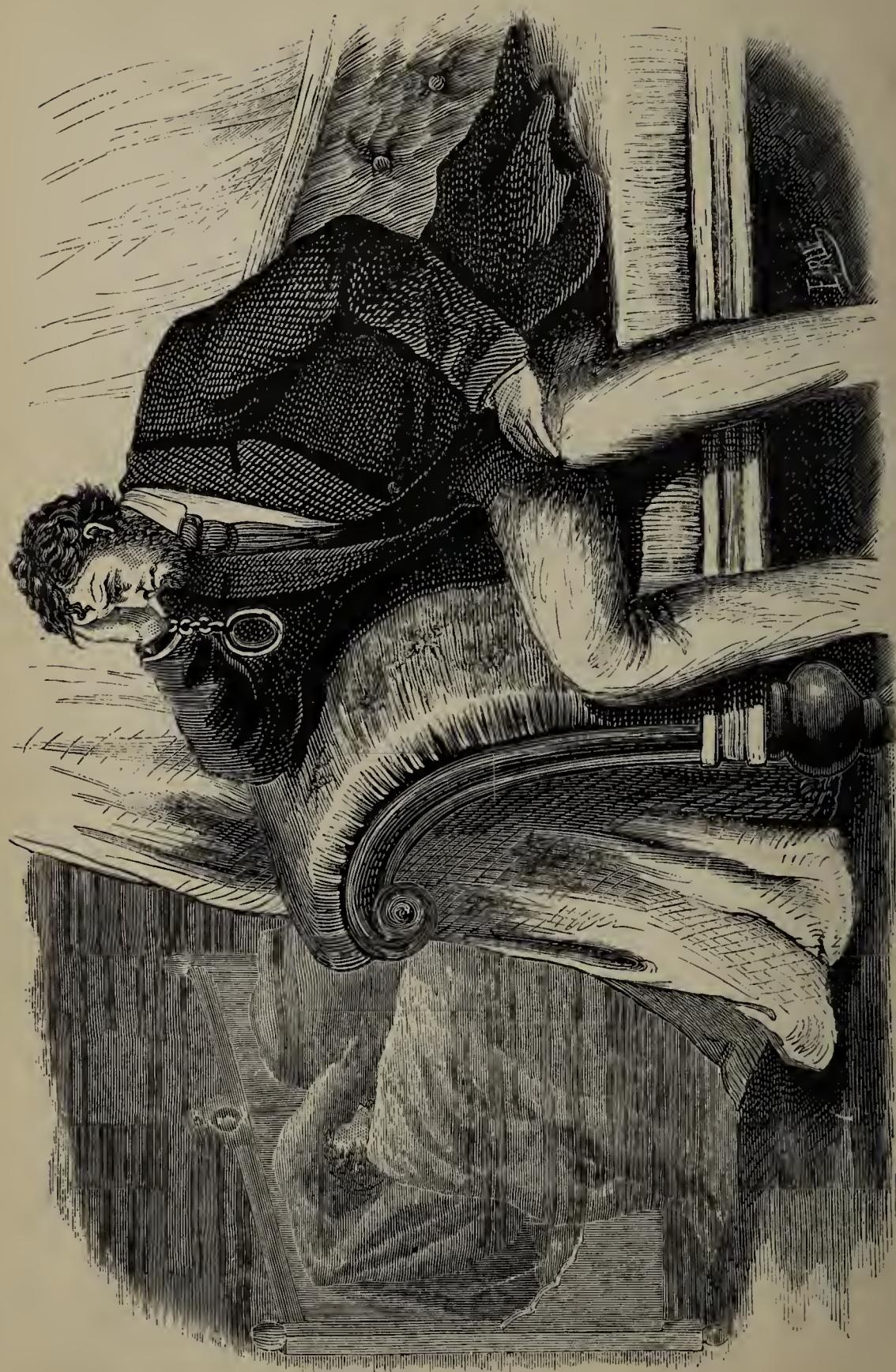
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1st Ed.

ALLAN PINKERTON'S
DETECTIVE STORIES.

OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS



FRONTISPICE.

CLAUDE MELNOTTE

AS A DETECTIVE,

AND OTHER STORIES.

BY ALLAN PINKERTON,

AUTHOR OF "THE EXPRESSMAN AND THE DETECTIVE," ETC.

CHICAGO:

W. B. KEEN, COOKE & CO.

113 AND 115 STATE STREET.

1875.

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P R E F A C E.

THE stories which compose this volume are taken from the author's original notes on three actual cases, which were placed in his hands several years ago. Whatever else may be said of these tales, they cannot be denied the merit of strict truthfulness; and it is to this quality, more than to any pretensions to literary excellence, that the author trusts in presenting them to the public.

The patrons of the old Clifton House in Chicago will readily recall the occurrences related in "Claude Melnotte," and many of the regular boarders will recognize the characters herein depicted. In some very minor details, a small ingredient of fiction has been introduced, but the accuracy of the story has not been perceptibly affected thereby. It is hardly necessary to state that the names given are all fictitious; the characters, however, are genuine, and the localities are correctly described.

The same is the case with the *dramatis personæ* of the "Two Sisters"; but, for obvious reasons, the scene of the abduction is located at some distance from the town where it actually occurred.

The operations of Jules Imbert, "The Frenchman," are given literally, without the slightest departure from the facts.

ALLAN PINKERTON.

CHICAGO, March, 1875.

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PUBLISHERS' NOTICE.

IN presenting the second volume of Allan Pinkerton's stories to the public, the publishers need only refer briefly to the world-wide reputation of the author: his name is known everywhere throughout the United States, Canada, and Great Britain as the Master Detective of the time, and his experience in his profession has been so varied that he can verify, in many of the incidents of his own life, that "truth is stranger than fiction."

The first volume, "The Expressman and the Detective," issued in November, 1874, furnished a complete and satisfactory test of the popularity of this kind of story; its almost unparalleled success clearly showed not only the public interest in Mr. Pinkerton, but, also, in the facts upon which the tale was founded. An idea of the demand for the first book may be gained from the fact that fifteen thousand copies were sold in less than sixty days after its publication, and the total sale has now reached twenty thousand.

"Claude Melnotte as a Detective," the first story in the second volume, presents the humorous and agreeable side of the detective's duties; the second story gives a darker view, showing that he must often encounter great dangers, play a part in great tragedies, and witness the

saddest scenes; the third tale is one of unusual importance to the business and banking community, illustrating, as it does, the skill and ingenuity of the higher class of forgers.

The variety of subjects can hardly fail to lend additional interest to this book, and the publishers confidently anticipate a greater sale than has been obtained for its predecessor in the series.

The third volume—now in the course of preparation—will contain two distinct stories, viz.:

“THE MURDERER AND THE FORTUNE TELLER;”

and

“THE MODEL TOWN AND THE DETECTIVES.”

Other stories will appear from time to time and will be duly announced by their titles. The present work will appear in the United States and Canada, and the succeeding volumes will be published simultaneously in Chicago, and in London, England.

W. B. KEEN, COOKE & CO.

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CLAUDE MELNOTTE

AS A DETECTIVE.

CHAPTER I.

LATE one evening in the fall of 1854, I was seated in my private office in Chicago, smoking a cigar, preparatory to going home for the night. The delightful Indian summer had just given way to the cold winds of November, which moaned and whistled around the building, mournfully heralding the near approach of icy-handed winter. I had turned down the gas and seated myself in a comfortable easy-chair before a bright coal fire, which lit up the room with a soft, mellow light. The surroundings were well adapted for the repose of mind and body, and I mechanically puffed away at my cigar, while enjoying a well-earned rest after a day of exciting work. As I was revolving in my mind the events of the day and laying plans for the morrow, I was disturbed in my reverie by the entrance of Mr. Stuart, one of my clerks, who said that there were three gentlemen in the main office desirous of seeing me. I was somewhat annoyed at the interruption, being anxious to go home soon, but as my motto has always been, "Business before

pleasure," I said that I would see the visitors, and a moment later three fashionably dressed young gentlemen walked in. They introduced themselves as Messrs. Williams, Henry, and Robinson, and stated that they had been appointed members of a committee to secure my services in detecting the perpetrator of a series of robberies in their hotel.

"What hotel do you refer to, Mr. Robinson?" I asked.

"The Clifton House, on Wabash avenue," he replied.

I knew it well, as it is always my habit to keep thoroughly posted in regard to the city hotels. The Clifton House was the most fashionable hotel in Chicago at that time, and numbered among its guests many of the best people in the city. It was mainly a family hotel, and had gained so high a reputation by the superior manner in which it was conducted that many merchants and professional men had settled themselves with their families as permanent occupants of suites of rooms therein. Among its other attractions was the sociability with which all the permanent boarders mingled together, forming a very large and agreeable coterie of mutual acquaintances. There were many young, unmarried men of wealth and high social position, who made the house their headquarters and contributed largely to the gaiety of the winter season, so that the Clifton House hops were always attended by the *haut ton* of the city. These advantages rendered a residence in the Clifton House so desirable as to make it a centre of the wealth and fashion of Chicago. The idea that a vulgar thief could have entered this elysium of fashionable bliss seemed too preposterous to be believed.

I asked Mr. Robinson why they had not reported their losses to the landlord and required him to make an investigation.

This, they said, they had already done, and the landlord had exhausted every plan in his power in the attempt to ferret out the thief, but with no success whatever. He had called in the city detectives, but they had been completely baffled, and, in spite of all precautions, the losses still continued. In this dilemma the boarders had held a meeting, at which the ladies were largely represented, and had appointed this committee to wait upon me to engage my services, if possible, to detect the criminal. The landlord was sorely troubled and was continually discharging servants, but this had no effect, as someone was sure to be robbed as often, on an average, as once a week. The stealing had been going on for over ten months, and many of the boarders had determined to leave the house unless the thief should be caught very soon.

The ladies suffered equally with the gentlemen, hence it was impossible to determine the sex of the thief. Not only were valuables of all kinds taken, but also dresses, gloves, skirts, coats, pantaloons, and even the undergarments of both sexes. Evidently the thief was able to dispose of the plunder, since no one individual could possibly make any personal use of the great variety of articles stolen.

A Mrs. Judson had lost a valuable gold watch and twenty-five dollars in cash. The pecuniary loss, to a lady of her wealth, was trifling, but the watch was a wedding

present from her husband, and she valued it far above its intrinsic worth.

From a Mr. Seymour's room about forty dollars in cash and a number of new shirts had been taken. He had left the money at the bottom of one of his bureau drawers, securely locked, but the thief had evidently known just where to look for it, and, after leisurely taking out all the things in the drawer, had selected such as he (or she) wished, and had then carefully replaced the remaining articles just as they had been left by Mr. Seymour in the morning.

Mr. Robinson, also, had lost a revolver, a number of handkerchiefs, and some money.

The thief was, undoubtedly, a cool hand, able to discriminate carefully as to the value of personal property, and to work in a leisurely, systematic way.

Mr. Robinson stated that there was hardly anyone in the house who had not suffered, and that none of the boarders felt safe in leaving their rooms for an hour unoccupied. He said that some of his friends in New York, for whom I had then recently done some work, had spoken so highly of me that he was most desirous of securing my services, and he concluded by begging me to undertake the solution of the mystery.

This affair was one of those with which I have never liked to meddle. If the landlord had come to me, it would have been different; but, as it was, it was not satisfactory to me, and I tried to induce the committee to go elsewhere.

Mr. Robinson was not willing to do so, and, after much persuasion, I consented — not being busy otherwise — to examine into the case and see what I could do. The first

condition that I made, however, was that the committee should report to the meeting of boarders that I had refused positively to undertake the investigation. I further asked them to give me a list of the boarders in the house, made out so as to show the names of those who had been robbed, with the numbers of their rooms, and a description of the articles stolen from each.

The committee at once drew up a rough list from memory, and, on footing up the losses, we found that they amounted to between four and five thousand dollars in value. I told Mr. Robinson to call again in a day or two, and the committee then returned to the hotel to inform the other boarders of their failure to engage me.

On reflection, I determined that nothing could be done until I had made a thorough inspection of the house, and the next morning I paid a visit to the Clifton House for that purpose.

At that time very few people knew me personally, and I was able to go all over the house without anyone imagining that I was a detective. I took particular notice of the servants, being careful to see them all, but could not find among them a single suspicious character. Most of them were Irish, and, though not by any means faultless, there was no probability that any of them possessed the audacity and skill to operate so successfully, even had they had the wish to do so.

I returned to my office, a few blocks distant, fully convinced that the case would be a difficult one. I had not found the slightest clue which could give a direction to my suspicions, so that when Mr. Robinson and the other

members of the committee called, I could give them no encouraging news.

I asked them a number of questions about the various persons whom I had seen about the house, and they confirmed my good opinion of the help. I then told them that the mystery surrounding the affair made it interesting to me, and that I would consent to take it up, provided that my connection with it was kept a secret. I might, perhaps, succeed in getting on the right track soon, if the thief were not put on his guard against me; but there was no doubt that the difficulties of the case would be greatly increased if it should be generally known that I was engaged in working it up. The thief was, undoubtedly, a very skillful one, and would take unusual pains to avoid detection, the moment that it became known that a skilled detective had been employed.

The committee agreed to my conditions and left my office much pleased at having obtained my services.

Here I will say a few words relative to the professional detective.

One reason why the official detective is so often unsuccessful in capturing criminals is that he is so well-known. Even the small boys in the street, who regard him as a person endowed with supernatural powers, recognize him as he passes, and say: "There goes the detective!" All the bar-keepers know him, and have an extra "smile" for him—gratis. In like manner he is "dead-headed" at the hotels, theatres, restaurants and elsewhere, until he becomes, not only one of the best-known men in town, but also, one of the greatest "sponges" in the community. He dresses well, though a little loud, perhaps, hob-nobs

with professional gamblers, and is often "hail-fellow, well met," with the thieves themselves. He is most likely their boon companion, and gets his regular percentage of the very "swag" which he is hired to discover. If the losers are willing to pay more than the thieves can sell their plunder for elsewhere, the detective receives the money and returns the goods. In any event he gets his share. This whole class of detectives are ready to sell out or are already sold. This may be considered strong language, but it is the truth.

In my employ every person is watched. I hire them all on the supposition that they are honest, but it does no harm to see that they are not unduly exposed to temptation; so they are carefully watched, and rarely do they ever have an opportunity to be dishonest, even were they so inclined.

CHAPTER II.

I PUZZLED my brain for some time before I could arrange a plan of operation to suit me. I sat and meditated somewhat as follows:

“The amount stolen so far is large and is constantly increasing. What is the thief doing with the money? Is it hoarded for future use, or is it immediately squandered in fast living? It *can’t* be a servant. No servant could successfully carry out such a series of robberies; moreover, all the servants have been changed twice or thrice since the thefts began. No; I’m satisfied that it’s not a servant. How would it do to call on the landlord and the clerks, and question them about the boarders in the house? No; that won’t do. Mr. Robinson said that they were fully acquainted with all the facts, and had been completely baffled in their efforts to discover the guilty party. Besides, how do I know that the clerks, themselves, are not implicated? They have a better knowledge of the house and the movements of the boarders than anyone else, so that if one of them were dishonest, his opportunities for stealing would be very great. Another robbery will take place soon, hence I must act promptly. Let me see what I can do. There are a number of young men in the house — what if I should put an intelligent detective in the house as a boarder! That’s a good idea. I’ll do it. Now, whom shall I use? It will be a delicate job,

and I must have someone who can ingratiate himself with both men and women, since, for aught I know to the contrary, the culprit may be one of the fair sex."

I had in my employ, at that time, a young man named Streble, whom I felt inclined to entrust with this mission. He was Bavarian by birth, but had turned his back on the fatherland when quite young, to seek his fortune in the Far West. Like most Germans of the middle class, he was well educated, and possessed many accomplishments. He was a good musician, and had a rich baritone voice. He spoke both French and English, besides his native tongue, his foreign accent and grammatical errors being just sufficient to make him interesting. He had served as janitor in my building for nine or ten months, and I had found him so attentive to his duties that I had promoted him, in accordance with a rule which I have always observed, to watch all my employés and advance them as soon as they show themselves worthy. At first I had made him a "shadow," technically, not literally, and had used him amongst the Germans and Israelites whenever my services had been required to detect criminals among those nationalities. He had proved to be so serviceable that I had a very good opinion of his ability, discretion and zeal, and I therefore decided to employ him in this case.

Another brilliant idea struck me in this connection. The Clifton House would admit none but the wealthy and aristocratic to its charmed circles. At least, without wealth and position no boarder would be acceptable to the regular inmates of the house, nor could he expect to gain their confidence and intimacy. Hence, I determined

to introduce my detective in such a manner as to make him the admired of all admirers.

If Bulwer could turn a peasant into a prince, with the ability to impose upon the inhabitants of Lyons, who ought to have had some experience in the ways of royalty, why could not I pass my ex-janitor off for a prince, and make a second Claude Melnotte out of Mr. Streble? To be sure, I knew very little about the nobility of any country, but I was convinced that the so-called aristocracy of Chicago knew less. Some of the latter, with whom I was acquainted, railed most independently at the crowned heads of Europe, but I felt confident that they would prove to be the worst of toadies if they only could have a chance. Therefore, it occurred to me to give them an opportunity to worship at the shrine of an offshoot of royalty, if they felt so disposed, and this was my brilliant idea. I would give them a ready-made prince as an object for adoration. Thus, while giving them an opportunity to show the firmness of their republican principles, I should also do a neat stroke of business in catching the Clifton House thief.

CHAPTER III.

HAVING made up my mind to introduce Streble as a prince, I was under the necessity of deciding, also, whom he should represent. I had read somewhere about Prince Beauharnais, of Bavaria, and although I was entirely unacquainted with the history of his Highness, or whether he was then in existence, I was so sure that the Cliftonians would be equally ignorant, that I seized upon the name without any scruples whatever, and built upon it the following story for my detective:

He was to represent himself to be the son of Prince Beauharnais, of Bavaria. The Prince, himself, was then in the Crimea, having volunteered his services to aid the Allies against Russia. The French Government had gladly accepted his offer, and had assigned him to an important command. He desired that his son should enter the diplomatic service, and that he should be well acquainted with the customs of all countries. To that end, the young Prince had been sent to travel, and he had heard so much of this wonderful Far West that he had come almost direct to Chicago, after having visited the great capitals of Europe. The intention was that he should settle down quietly to observe the home-life and internal workings of each nation; and as our country was so large, he was to give out that he intended spending several months in each of the representative cities of the Union.

As he was to assume the character of a second Claude Melnotte, it might be his fate to encounter a Pauline, so I determined to instruct him not to go too far in his love-making. My idea was to carry out the comic side of Claude Melnotte's character in such a manner as to trace up the Clifton-House thief, without in the least endangering the happiness of any young lady to whom the Prince might devote himself.

I reasoned that the young ladies would be drawn to him much more by the desire for wealth and position than from any real feeling of the heart, hence losing him would not permanently affect their happiness. Their only serious regrets would be for the time lost in the vain endeavor to capture a real prince; but their disappointment would soon be forgotten.

Having arranged the plan, I immediately sent for Streble, and told him that he must prepare to enact the part of the son of Prince Beauharnais, of Bavaria. I had to laugh at the look of amazement that came into his face.

"What! I take the part of a prince!" said he. "Why, it would be impossible for me to sustain the character."

"Fear nothing, Streble," I said. "I will keep you posted, as I do not intend to send you out of Chicago."

He shook his head and said, laughingly:

"Indeed, it will be impossible for me to succeed here. I shall certainly be discovered, as so many people know me."

"I will risk that," I replied. "If anything goes wrong, I will take the consequences. Go down to Brannigan's and get measured for a full suit of clothes, and I will order a complete outfit for you, to-morrow."

The following day I dropped into Brannigan's and left orders for several suits for Streble, to be made of the best material and in the latest styles. I also ordered a large, heavy, military cloak, richly braided, and lined with blue silk. Continuing my walk, I made a tour of all the shops and purchased an elegant outfit for Streble, which included every essential article, both for use and ornament, which a young gentleman of wealth and rank would be apt to possess. His jewelry was not such as to produce the effect of over-display, but it was very valuable, though I did not purchase this portion of his equipment. Messrs. J. & E. Edwards, the fashionable jewelers of the city, were among my oldest and warmest friends, and from them I borrowed two diamond rings and a diamond pin, all of the stones being large and perfect. These, with a valuable gold watch and chain, a set of studs and sleeve-buttons, were all that I considered desirable for my prince to wear, and their value was such as to preclude the possibility of anyone accusing him of wearing cheap jewelry.

In order to give Streble an opportunity to disguise himself somewhat, I obtained a pair of large gold eye-glasses, fitted with plain crystals, so as not to interfere in the slightest degree with his eyesight. The disguise afforded by spectacles or eye-glasses is greater than might be supposed, so that I felt tolerably sure that none of Streble's acquaintances would recognize him, even if they met him, which was not likely.

I then looked around for a trunk which would fill its part in the plot. Of course I could get a trunk anywhere, but the difficulty was to obtain one of foreign manufacture, dented and soiled by foreign travel and an ocean

voyage. I remembered having seen one in the possession of Mr. Scarborough, President of the Ohio Valley Bank, Cincinnati, which was just suited to my purpose. The trunk was a large leather one, studded with brass nails, and covered with the marks of foreign railways, steamship lines and hotels. I immediately wrote to ask Mr. Scarborough to lend me the trunk, saying that, at some future time, I would cause him to laugh heartily at the use to which it had been put. In a few days I received it, and as the clothing and other articles were finished, they were soon packed ready for operations to begin.

Streble was a handsome fellow, and after having had his hair trimmed and his face shaved, leaving only a fine moustache and goatee, he was as stylish a young man as could be found in Chicago.

When all was ready, I called him into my private office, and gave him his instructions. After posting him as to the character of the Clifton House and its guests, I related the particulars of the robberies which had been committed there, and the difficulty in detecting the thief. To him would be entrusted this important duty; and, while he was to be honored and entertained as a prince, he was not to forget to keep his eyes open. Nothing must escape his notice, and he must be as wary and discreet as it was possible to be. Moreover, no mere circumstances of wealth and position should be permitted to exempt anyone from his watchful care, and suspicions directed toward a millionaire were to be reported as fully as those which would implicate the poorest in the house. (Indeed, I strongly suspected that the culprit, when found, would prove to be

one whose position apparently made him, or her, above suspicion:)

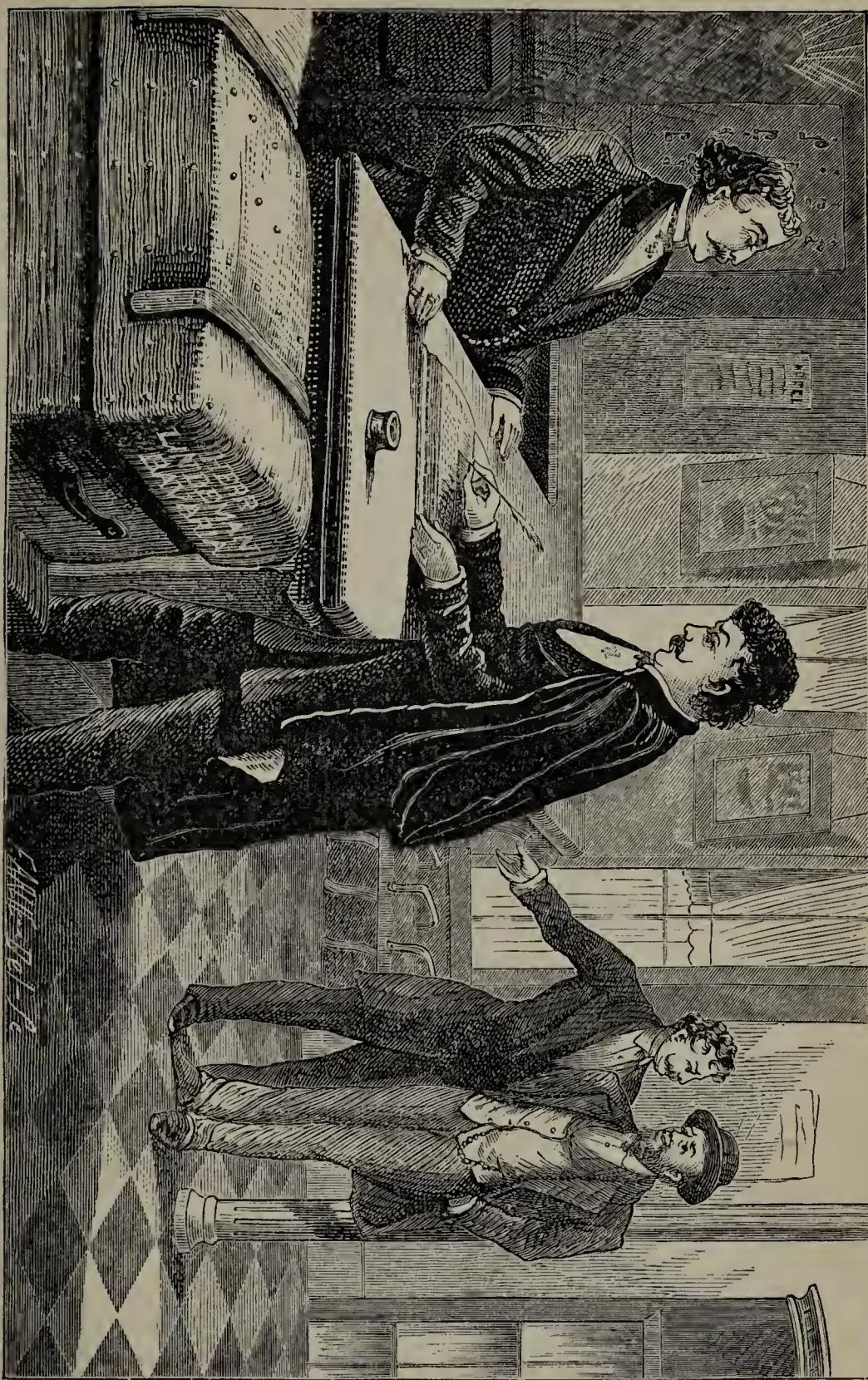
He was not to proclaim himself to be the son of a prince, but I would see that the report was started, and, on being questioned, he was to acknowledge it to be true. He was to register himself as Herr Lindeman, and when his real rank was discovered, the mystery surrounding him would make him doubly attractive. As he became well acquainted with the Clifton House boarders, he was to throw off all pretense of concealment, and describe the splendor of his father's palace, his immense wealth, the gaieties of court life, etc. He was to be liberal to the gentlemen, and especially polite and attentive to the fair sex.

I arranged that he should go to Niles, Michigan, by the Michigan Central Railroad. Thence he was to go to South Bend, Indiana, by carriage, there assume his princely character, and return to Chicago by the Michigan Southern Railroad. He was then to go to the Briggs House for the night. In the morning he was to inquire of the proprietor, Mr. French, where the banking house of R. K. Swift & Co. was situated. Mr. French, with his customary politeness, would probably accompany Herr Lindeman to the bank, where the latter was to present letters of credit to an immense amount, endorsed by Prince Beauharnais, payable to his son. I had let my friend Swift into the secret, and he had arranged this part of the affair so as completely to convince anyone of the Prince's identity and wealth. Herr Lindeman was then to remain at the Briggs House until a report of his rank and fortune

had been well circulated, after which, he would have no difficulty in obtaining rooms in the Clifton House.

I impressed upon Streble many instructions as to his deportment and vigilance, and ordered him to report to me daily, whenever it was possible to do so. The trunk and Streble then departed to take the night train for Niles, and my plan was, at last, in operation.

As the gentleman walked leisurely to the desk to register his name we saw a very distinguished looking person.—
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CHAPTER IV.

ON the following day, being anxious to see how my newly-made prince would conduct himself, I entered the Briggs House shortly before the hour when he should arrive, and remained in the office, talking to Mr. French. A violent snow-storm had set in, and we stood near the stove watching the heavy snow-flakes as they rapidly descended. Presently a carriage dashed up, from which a traveler alighted and hurried into the hotel. I knew who it was before I saw him, having recognized his trunk.

As the gentleman walked leisurely to the desk to register his name, we saw a very distinguished-looking person. He wore a fine sealskin cap and a large military cloak, the latter being wrapped gracefully around his tall and commanding figure. Mr. French, who, like all hotel-keepers, prided himself on his ability to read character, glanced at the new-comer, and said :

“That young man is a gentleman of rank. I have never seen him before, but he has a thorough-bred look, such as you see only in those who have been accustomed to command. There is an indescribable something about the nobility by which I always know them. Excuse me, Pinkerton, I will attend to him myself.”

So saying, Mr. French hurried over to the desk, where he found that his new arrival had registered his name as Herr Lindeman. He was assigned to the finest suite of

rooms in the house, and everything was done that could add to his comfort. Mr. French, himself, showed the distinguished stranger to the rooms prepared for him, and a special servant was assigned to his service. In about half an hour Mr. French returned, and said to me :

“I was right about that gentleman, Pinkerton. He is the son of a Bavarian prince, and is traveling *incog.* in order to study our customs and manners quietly. He would not have let me into the secret, but for the fact that he has some large letters of credit from his father, drawn upon R. K. Swift & Co., and he wants me to go to the bank with him in the morning. Don’t mention it to any-one, as he charged me to keep his rank a secret.”

I assured him that the secret was safe with me, and told him to warn the Prince to be careful about his pocket-book, as there were many pickpockets about. I then returned to my office, well pleased with my prince, and fully convinced that he would maintain his character without any danger of being considered an impostor.

The following morning Herr Lindeman went to Swift’s bank, accompanied by Mr. French. I was in the bank when they arrived, and was greatly amused at the perfect gravity with which Mr. Swift and the Prince played their respective parts for the benefit of Mr. French.

Mr. Swift received the Prince with great consideration, as previous advices from his foreign correspondents had informed him of the Prince’s intended visit. The letters of credit were at once accepted, and a heavy sum placed subject to the Prince’s order, which he could draw upon at his convenience.

Business matters having been settled, the conversation

turned upon the Prince's travels, and he told Mr. Swift that, in order to ensure quietness, he was traveling under the name of Herr Lindeman. He asked, as a favor, that Mr. Swift would not acquaint anyone with his real rank.

Messrs. Swift & Co. asked after the health of Prince Beauharnais (the elder), and said that they would like to get him to invest some of his great wealth in Chicago. If he would place in their hands the small sum of half a million dollars, they could double it in a short time.

The Prince showed profound ignorance of business matters, and soon turned the conversation to the war in the Crimea, where he had recently been on a visit to his father. He gave some vivid descriptions of one or two battles which he had witnessed, and chatted very pleasantly for some time.

He then returned to the Briggs House with the delighted Mr. French, who was more than ever impressed with his guest's importance. After lunch, the Prince spent over an hour in writing to his father, giving him a glowing description of the wonders of the New World, and advising him to pay it a visit. (At least, this was what he told Mr. French he had written.)

He then inquired the way to the post-office, and Mr. French offered to send a boy with the letter, but the Prince said that he needed a little exercise, and would post it himself. He then walked around the streets for some time, and finally dropped into my office to report. I congratulated him warmly on the manner in which he had acted, and he returned to the hotel in high spirits.

Mr. French kept the secret as most people keep secrets. He told a few of his particular friends that he had a

genuine prince stopping at his hotel, but that they must keep it a secret. They naturally spread the news among *their* intimate friends, and before night a large number of gentlemen were well acquainted with all the circumstances of the case. It was not surprising, therefore, that an evening paper should have made the following announcement:

“Chicago is honored with the presence of a Bavarian prince, who, with a most commendable modesty, is traveling as Herr Lindeman. He will be surprised to read this notice, but he must remember that it is impossible to keep any news concealed from Chicago reporters.”

The Prince remained at the Briggs House four days, going out very seldom, as the snow had begun to melt, leaving the streets in a disagreeable condition for either driving or walking. He was a connoisseur in cigars, and smoked incessantly, besides opening his cigar-case to every gentleman to whom he was introduced. I cautioned him against this habit, telling him that so much smoking was bad for his health; but he had now got an opportunity to smoke at my expense, and smoke he would. In point of fact, it was the expense that I objected to, as he began to draw rather heavily upon my purse-strings.

On the morning of the fourth day, while in conversation with Mr. Barnum, the gentlemanly clerk of the hotel, the Prince asked if there were any private hotels in Chicago, similar to those in Bavaria, where a person would be removed from the hurry and noise of a transient house. He would like to find the quiet of a home hotel, where he could enjoy the refining influences of ladies' society.

Mr. Barnum said that there were several such hotels in Chicago, the Clifton House being considered the best, as

it was patronized by the best society of the city. He then offered to take the Prince there and show him through the house, if he so desired.

The Prince accepted the offer, and together they wended their way to the Clifton House. Mr. Barnum felt quite proud as he stepped out with the Prince; but when the latter offered him a fragrant Havana, imported for the Prince's own use, the delighted clerk was quite overcome. As he carefully puffed away, with a look of ecstasy in his face, he declared that he had never before smoked such a fine cigar. These cigars, which the Prince stated were selected carefully in Havana and imported solely for his use, were pronounced by all who smoked them to be superior to any cigar in the market. The actual fact, however, regarding the cigars was that I had bought them of Frankenthal, under the Sherman House.

After a pleasant walk, Mr. Barnum and the Prince entered the Clifton House. The latter was introduced to the landlord as Herr Lindeman, but his fame had gone before him, and the landlord was delighted at the prospect of having a prince for a guest. The Prince examined all the vacant apartments and finally decided to take a suite of rooms two flights up, on the Wabash avenue side of the house. He was influenced in making his choice by the fact that it was the portion of the house occupied by the young, unmarried gentlemen, and he would be a near neighbor to the members of the committee. The suite, consisting of parlor, bed-room and bath-room, were elegantly furnished, and commanded a fine view of the avenue. The Prince made arrangements to take immediate possession, and then returned to the Briggs House with Mr. Barnum.

CHAPTER V.

IT was soon known at the Clifton House that a prince was coming to stay there, and the guests were quite excited in consequence. The young ladies declared emphatically that they would show him no more consideration than was due to any other gentleman, and that, as he might imagine that his rank entitled him to great attention, they would treat him with distant politeness. They resolved to show this representative of the Old World despotisms how little the citizens of a free republic cared for rank and so-called aristocracy.

This was about the style in which the belles of the Clifton House talked to each other, but in fact each one was determined to make him “the captive of her bow and spear,” if possible. Of course, none of them cared for his wealth or position—oh, no! but it would be so agreeable to be able to say that Prince so-and-so was once a devoted admirer. Besides, it was worth while to captivate him, just to save him from the arts and manœuvres of certain designing girls in the hotel who would be sure to try to entrap him.

The Prince bade good-bye to Mr. French and his other acquaintances at the Briggs House, and asked them to call upon him at the Clifton. He then sent his baggage in advance, and shortly after, was driven to the Clifton House, arriving just in time for dinner, which was usually served at six o’clock.

That day was marked, not only by the Prince's arrival, but also by an unusually heavy robbery. Mrs. Blackall, one of the wealthy guests, had spent the day in visiting her friends, but before going out, she had taken the precaution to hide about four hundred dollars in a secure place in her bureau. Her husband, who was in New York, had sent her the money the day previous, and she had kept it in her possession, instead of depositing it in bank, as she had expected to use it all in a day or two. Having locked the bureau drawer, and also the door of her room, she had gone away without any misgivings. On her return in the evening, she found her door still locked, but on lighting the gas and glancing at her bureau, she saw that the drawer which she had locked was wide open and the money was missing. She immediately rang her bell violently, and in a few minutes the clerks, servants, and other boarders rushed in to learn what had alarmed her. For a moment she could not speak, but she pointed to her bureau, and finally gasped out:

"Oh ! this is shocking ! Some one has taken all my money. I have lost over three hundred dollars ! What shall I do ?"

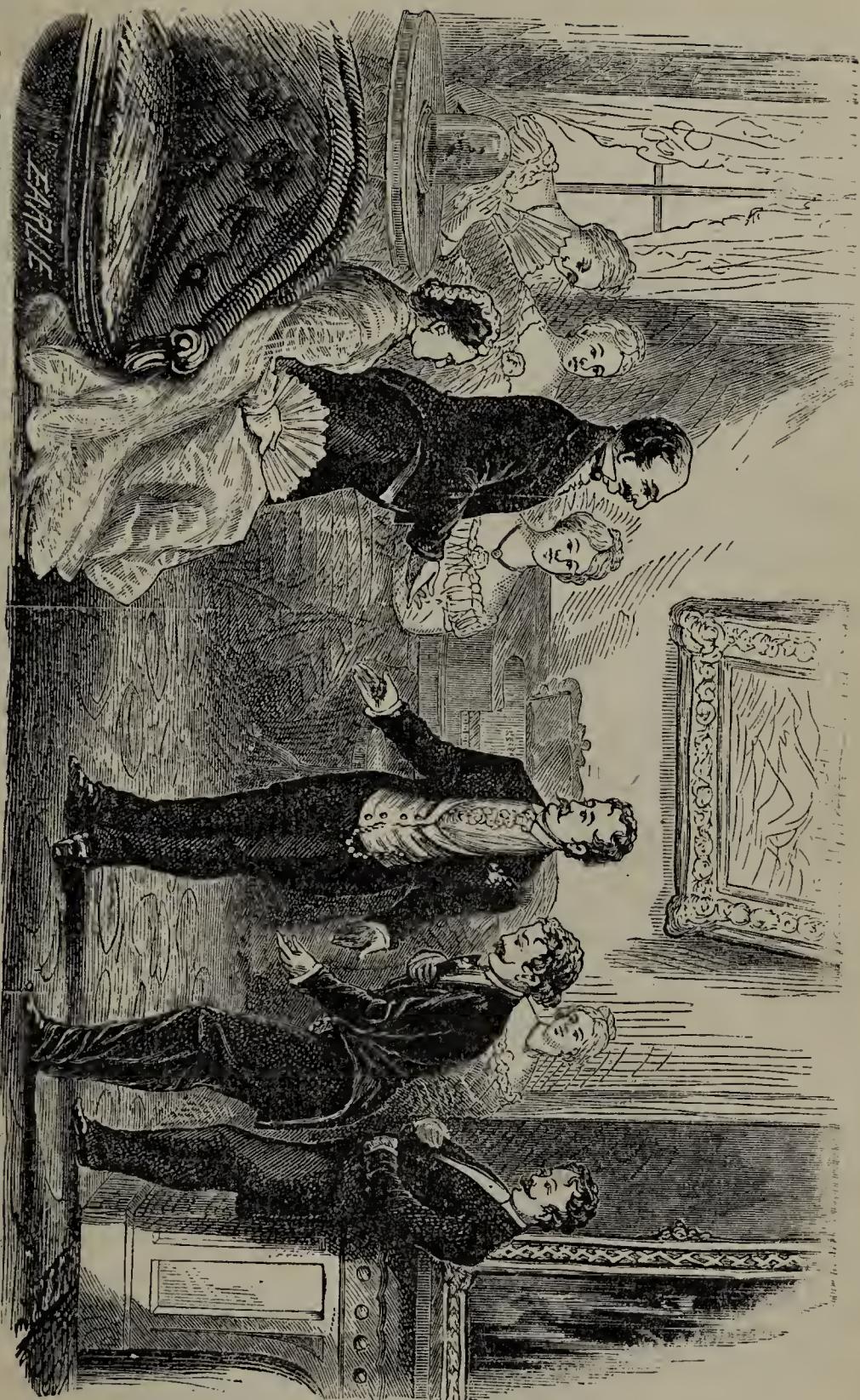
The committee, Messrs. Robinson, Williams and Henry, were sent for immediately. On entering the room they cleared it of the crowd, and strove to console Mrs. Blackall, but, like Rachel, she refused to be comforted. Finally Mr. Robinson was obliged to tell her of the steps they had taken to discover the thief, and that I had been engaged to work up the case. He assured her that he would at once lay her loss before me in order to incite me to act promptly, and without doubt, her money would be recovered.

In a few minutes several ladies called upon Mrs. Blackall to condole with her, and soon the room was filled with an excited and indignant crowd of ladies. The whole party united in condemning the committee as a lazy, supine, and incompetent trio, who had done nothing whatever to protect their fellow-boarders.

Mr. Robinson could not withstand the volleys of bitter sarcasm which were aimed at him, and therefore, in order to quiet the ladies, he told them, first pledging them to secrecy, that the committee had secured my services, and that I hoped soon to capture the thief. Having somewhat satisfied them with this information, Mr. Robinson hurried to my office and gave me the particulars of the last robbery, concluding by stating that he had told the ladies of my connection with the case.

I felt much annoyed at this evidence of Mr. Robinson's inability to keep a secret, but I could not help congratulating myself that I had not entrusted him with the details of my plan. I saw clearly that if he had known the identity of the supposed Prince, he would have revealed that secret too, and my plan would have been useless. I therefore told him that the man whom I intended to employ in the case was very busily engaged just then, but that I would put him at work very soon, and that the committee need not fear the result. Mr. Robinson then took his leave, quite reassured.

During the evening, the Prince loitered in the office for some time, and the landlord introduced him to many of the guests. His easy, agreeable manners at once made him popular, and he was soon on good terms with most of the gentlemen in the house. While he was smoking



When they had finished their cigars, Mr. Bright invited the Prince into the parlor, where a very of ladies had gathered.—Page 33.

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and chatting with a group of the boarders in the smoking-room, a young man of polished manners and pleasant address, came forward gracefully, and introduced himself to the Prince as Mr. Edward Bright. He said the only excuse he could offer for his forwardness was that the Prince had selected rooms immediately adjoining his own, and as they were to be near neighbors, he wished very much to make the Prince's acquaintance.

The Prince replied that he hated ceremony, and was glad to meet a gentleman who had the courage to ignore forms. He disliked the English custom of holding aloof from every one until a regular introduction was obtained. He admired Mr. Bright's frankness, and would be glad to regard him as a friend. He offered Mr. Bright a cigar, and together they walked up and down the smoking-room. In the course of the conversation, Mr. Bright, who was well acquainted with the local history of Chicago, gave the Prince much useful and interesting information about the growth of the "Garden City."

"Only think," he said, "that only twenty years ago, the site whereon this wonderful city stands was a wilderness. To-day we see this noble city, inhabited by its one hundred thousand souls. By enterprise, industry, and perseverance has this great change been accomplished. The man is now living who will see this city the metropolis of the West."

When they had finished their cigars, Mr. Bright invited the Prince into the parlor, where a bevy of ladies had gathered, all anxious to see the Prince and make his acquaintance. Mr. Bright felt highly pleased at having the opportunity to introduce the Prince. He knew that

the ladies were dying to know His Highness, and that his boldness in bringing about the desired introductions would be very much appreciated by them.

The Prince remained in conversation with a group of ladies for some time, charming them all by his agreeable conversation and well-turned compliments. His trifling German accent only rendered him more interesting, and he was voted charming by every lady present. He finally went to the piano, where a Miss Hume was playing, and began talking of music.

"Have you heard this song?" asked Miss Hume, taking up a new and popular ballad.

The Prince glanced at it a moment, hummed a line or two of the air, and said:

"No, I haf not; it is a pleasure for the future."

"Oh! you read music!" said Miss Hume; "perhaps you sing also?"

"Well—a little, just for myself, sometimes," said the Prince.

"I am sure you sing well, Herr Lindeman," said Bright, who was standing near. "Come, please favor us with some of your magnificent German songs. There are no songs like them."

The ladies all joined in pressing him to sing, and finally he consented. Taking the seat vacated by Miss Hume, he played a few chords rapidly to accustom his fingers to the instrument, and then sang Schubert's "Farewell," in a rich powerful baritone. As he concluded, he was greeted with great applause, and all the complimentary adjectives in the dictionary were showered upon him.

"You are a splendid musician, Herr Lindeman," said

Bright. "You must have studied at some of the great schools of music in Europe."

"Yes," the Prince replied, modestly, "I am passionately fond of music, and have studied at Munich and Paris."

When the Prince left the parlor, it was unanimously conceded that he was a talented musician. In fact, he had quite taken the ladies by storm, and they pronounced him the most polished gentleman they had ever met.

Thus was the Prince introduced into the charmed circle of the Clifton House, and his career thenceforward was a continued ovation.

CHAPTER VI.

THE following day began with a heavy snow-storm, but toward noon the storm ceased, and Mr. Bright invited the Prince to go out with him. The Prince put on his cap and military cloak, and the two gentlemen took quite a long walk. The Prince found Mr. Bright a most agreeable companion, and under the latter's guidance he soon became acquainted with the principal objects of interest in the city. Indeed, it was astonishing how soon he learned to find his way about the streets.

They strolled about for some time, admiring the pretty faces which were whirled past them in gliding sleighs, and the pretty feet and ankles, the display of which the sloppy sidewalks necessitated. They finally stopped at the Tremont House bar, where Mr. Bright introduced the Prince to a number of fancy American drinks. The Prince noticed that Mr. Bright was a heavy drinker, and that he seemed very well provided with funds. No matter how much money the Prince spent, Mr. Bright always met him half-way.

After calling on Mr. French at the Briggs House, they spent the time until five o'clock in visiting the fashionable billiard halls, in all of which Mr. Bright was well-known. At five, they returned to the Clifton House, to dress for dinner.

Mr. Bright evidently regarded the Prince as under his

special chaperonage, and therefore took a seat next him at dinner. During the progress of the meal he gave the Prince a rapid sketch of the various family parties in the vicinity of their seats, and greatly amused him by his droll way of condensing the descriptions of other people into a few words.

“The people sitting opposite to us are Mr. and Mrs. Abbott, their son and daughter. They are a very fine family—a rare instance of the combination of money and breeding. Miss Abbott is just ‘coming out,’ and will be a great belle.”

“Yes, she is very beautiful,” said the Prince.

“That party of three, next to the Abbotts, are Mr. and Mrs. Barrett and their son. Barrett is a wealthy dry-goods merchant, and does everything, regardless of expense—and taste. His daughter is in Europe at present, ‘finishing’ an education which never was half commenced. He talks of going to Europe to bring his daughter home, next summer. Mr. Kimball and his sister are staring at you from the next table. Kimball is in the boot-and-shoe business, and is rapidly pegging his way into an immense fortune. He, also, is going abroad, to hunt up his aristocratic relatives in England. The gentleman near Miss Kimball, who looks as if he had swallowed a poker, is the distinguished Irish advocate, Miles Foggerty. He thinks he can make a jury believe anything, and so he can—if he will only argue against it.”

In this way, Bright went through the list of boarders, with all of whom he was well acquainted. He hit off the characteristics of the various persons very happily, and was evidently a good judge of human nature. He was a

thorough man of the world, and was an invaluable aid to the Prince in introducing him to the other guests, after dinner.

In the evening they passed an hour or two very delightfully in the parlor. Several of the young ladies sang and played, and the Prince was then induced to sing a piece of his own composition, which was generally admired. The authorship of the song was brought out by the persistence with which one young lady called for the name of the composer. He was followed by Mr. Bright, who was a much superior musician to the Prince, both naturally and by education; but the latter's title covered all defects, and the ladies mentally decided in his favor, in comparing the two.

The next day was bright and pleasant, and every one was outdoors during the forenoon. The Prince managed to elude all the other boarders, in order to come to my office to report. In some way, his story aroused a slight suspicion in my mind with regard to Bright. I can hardly say what it was in Bright's conduct that caught my attention, except perhaps his effusive manner toward the Prince, and the fact that he seemed to have no regular occupation nor business of any kind. Other gentlemen were friendly and hospitable toward the Prince, but Bright seemed desirous of taking him completely under his own charge. Most of the other young men smoked and drank occasionally; but Bright seemed to be continually spending a good deal of money in gratifying his appetite. I had an unaccountable feeling that Bright was playing a part, with an object in view. I kept my suspicions to myself, however, not even mentioning them to the Prince.

In the afternoon the Prince returned to the Clifton House and entered the smoking-room to have a quiet smoke, but hearing music in the parlor, he changed his mind and walked in there. The only occupants of the room were Mrs. Pearson and her daughter. Mrs. Pearson was a wealthy widow, having no other living relatives but her daughter. The latter was a beautiful blonde, with an exquisite complexion, regular features, rosy lips, and a plump, well-developed figure.

Miss Pearson was at the piano when the Prince entered, but she stopped playing immediately, and greeted him heartily. The Prince begged her to continue playing, and took a seat by her side.

Mrs. Pearson's motherly heart was filled with delight to see her daughter *tete-a-tete* with the Prince, and she could not repress the thought:

“What a handsome couple they would make!”

They certainly got along together very pleasantly. Miss Pearson had studied German for some time, hence the conversation was carried on in that language. She spoke the language quite well, but if she made a mistake, the Prince had such a gentle way of correcting her that she felt quite at ease with him. If she only had him for a teacher, she said, how soon she would become proficient!

The subject of life in Germany was introduced, and the Prince gave her some very entertaining information as to the home life and customs of the higher classes in that country. He also vividly described the pleasures of Munich, Berlin and Paris, and said that nothing would so much please him as to be her guide when she visited the Old World.

Miss Pearson was highly flattered by the Prince's attention, while her mother fairly worshiped him. She felt that a tour under such circumstances would be perfectly enchanting, especially as she concluded that the Prince would not have made such an offer unless he had been in love with her daughter. The prospect of having a prince for a son-in-law seemed quite near realization, and Mrs. Pearson's joy thereat was great. In order to cement the acquaintance, she invited the Prince to accompany them on a sleigh-ride next day, and he accepted with great pleasure.

Alas ! who would have thought that Mrs. Pearson, only a few days previous, had been one of the loudest in her condemnation of "those American girls who would so fail in their allegiance to the Great Republic as to marry a foreigner, just for his title." Yet those had been her very words.

CHAPTER VII.

THE *tete-a-tete* in the parlor was suddenly interrupted by a loud noise, followed by the rushing of people in the halls. The Prince hurried out with the frightened ladies clinging to him for protection, and found that Mr. Hutchinson's room had been entered and ransacked by a thief. They went up to the room, which they found full of excited boarders, all loud in their denunciations of the servants. Foremost among the indignant guests was Bright, who informed the Prince that Mr. Hutchinson had received four hundred dollars a few days before, which he had intended to use in a short time, and hence had not deposited it in bank. To insure its safety, however, he had secreted it under the carpet in his room. He had told a few particular friends how securely he had hidden his money, but had mentioned it to no one else. Yet, now, on coming home, he had found that a diamond pin, a dozen shirts, and two hundred and fifty dollars of this money had been stolen. There could be no doubt this time, Bright said, that a servant was the thief, since no outsider could escape with such bulky plunder without being noticed.

The landlord immediately sent for a city detective, who soon arrived. He looked very wise, and said just what most detectives would have said:

“What in h—l did the man put the money under the

carpet for? Why didn't he carry it in his pocket? There is one thing certain—the shirts were stolen by one of these d—d Irish biddies to give to her beau," his theory in this respect coinciding with Bright's.

"Now we must keep a sharp watch on them all," continued the detective. "The landlord must order all the girls to stay in the house unless they have permission to go out. If any of them ask leave to go, I will arrest them and see whether they have not hidden the shirts under their clothes. I will soon go through them," he added, with a sneering laugh.

The Prince said that this was the first time he had ever seen any thing of the kind. The detective, he thought, must be a very shrewd fellow, and it was fortunate that they had secured so valuable a man.

The detective then retired to the bar-room, and while eagerly swallowing the drinks to which the boarders treated him liberally, he laid before them his plan for capturing the guilty biddy. He intended placing two detectives of the second grade outside the house. Then, if any of the servants left the house the "shadows" would follow them and "give them to an officer." They would then be searched, and if the stolen property were found on them, he would soon put them where they could do no more harm.

This was all rather vague, as he neglected to inform the boarders how the servants could be arrested in the street and searched without any warrants. Moreover, he also forgot to say what would happen if he arrested and searched an innocent person. But these little trifles were not noticed by the boarders, who had great confidence in anything that called itself a detective.

The Prince retired to his room to dress for dinner, but watched his opportunity to slip out unseen and came straight to my office. He reported the facts of the robbery, and of the presence and plans of the city detective. I said that the latter's movements would not interfere with us, since if he *could* find the thief, so much the better, though I had no faith in him whatever.

I complimented the Prince on his zeal and attention to duty, and instructed him to learn all he could about Bright. I wished especially to find out where the latter was just previous to Hutchinson's discovery of his loss.

"Not that I suspect Bright," I added, "for I also think this theft was committed by the servants. But still, find out whether Bright, or a servant, or anyone else, was seen in the hall in the vicinity of Hutchinson's room. By the way, was there any mark on the shirts?"

"Yes," replied the Prince, "there was a large letter H in the lower corner of each one."

"Well, that's all," I said; "you can return to the Clifton, Prince."

The Prince returned to the hotel, and went down to dinner a little late. After dinner he entered the smoking-room, where he found Bright engaged in narrating the details of the robbery and his reasons for believing that it had been committed by a servant. The Prince noticed that even Mr. Hutchinson himself did not take any more interest in the robbery than Bright. The boarders thought that Bright reasoned very forcibly, and that he was an exceedingly kind-hearted young man to take such an interest in another's loss.

After a time Bright joined the Prince, and they went to

the billiard-room. They smoked and played billiards for an hour, and then joined the ladies in the parlor. The Prince was in high spirits, and succeeded in entertaining his fair admirers most charmingly. He was prevailed upon to play, and as usual, his performance was greeted with great applause.

As he finished playing, he glanced around and saw that Bright was not in the room. He had intended to tell Bright of the engagement to go sleigh-riding with the Pearsons the next day, and so he excused himself from the company and stepped into the hall to look for his young friend. He thought he saw a figure like Bright's passing out of the front door, so he hurried after him, intending merely to speak to him a moment and then return. As the night was cold, he seized his fur cap and went out the side entrance. On reaching the street, he saw Bright walking away rapidly, and the idea suddenly flashed into his mind to follow. He had received no orders to "shadow" anyone, but he thought it could do no harm to see where this fashionable young idler spent his evenings.

Bright walked to Dearborn street, and turning north, continued in that direction until he arrived opposite the Tremont House, when he suddenly dashed up a pair of stairs and disappeared.

"Aha! this will be good news for Pinkerton," said the Prince, as he returned to the hotel, where he spent the remainder of the evening in the parlor.

The Prince came down to breakfast early the next morning, but his friend Bright did not appear. After waiting for some time, the Prince took a walk alone,

arriving at my office about ten o'clock. After hearing his report, I said :

" You did well to follow Bright. So he went to Bill Gardner's faro rooms, did he? That's a point of some importance. He knew the way so well that it is evident he had been there before. I should like to know what money he played with. It is too late to find that out now, but I will provide for him after this. Whenever you step to the door, you will see one of my 'shadows' approaching you from the direction of the lake. He will follow Bright and leave you to your duty in the Clifton House. If you do not see the 'shadow,' however, you must follow Bright yourself."

The Prince returned to the Clifton House, and after lunch, was promptly on hand to fulfill his engagement with Mrs. Pearson. Her handsome sleigh, drawn by a span of coal black, thorough-bred horses, was at the door, and the weather and sleighing were remarkably fine. The Prince handed the ladies to their seats, a vacant place beside Miss Pearson being left for him, and they were soon flying down the avenue. Miss Pearson renewed her interesting conversation of the previous day with the Prince, while her happy mamma beamed upon them approvingly from the opposite seat. From every window of the hotel, as they moved off, envious glances were thrown after them, while Mrs. Pearson was pronounced "a foxy old schemer," and her daughter "an impudent minx." The party was certainly very stylish and attracted much attention. The conversation between Miss Pearson and the Prince was still carried on in German, and the young lady's face, lit up with bright smiles, showed how

much she was enjoying herself. Suddenly she turned to her mother and said :

“Oh! mamma! how delightful! The Prince has been telling me all about the Crimean war, and he says that when we go to Europe he will get passes from his father to visit the battle-fields, and will show us the spot where the Light Brigade made their famous charge.”

“Oh! indeed; you are too kind, Prince. I don’t know how we can sufficiently thank you,” replied the overjoyed Mrs. Pearson.

“The charm of to haf such agreeable society will be to me a sufficient reward,” replied the Prince, bowing gallantly.

It will be seen that my Prince did not lack inventive capacity in the bestowal of his promises, for, as I afterwards learned, he never made two alike. He was naturally obliged to draw heavily on his imagination to satisfy all his friends equally, and, I must say, he succeeded marvelously. Having once agreed to “play the prince,” he was determined that no petty considerations of expense or trouble should interfere with his princely generosity — in promises.

After a most enjoyable ride, the party returned to the Clifton House in the best of spirits.

Shortly after his return, the Prince met Bright, who complained of not having slept well the night before. He said that he did not feel well, and invited the Prince to step down to the bar-room. Here Bright drank heavily, as usual, ordering “brandy smashes.”

“What is that?” asked the Prince. “I should it like to taste,” and he, also, called for one.

He pronounced it too strong for him, however, as in Bavaria he was accustomed to drink only beer and light wines.

From the bar-room they went into the sitting-room, and as it was not time to dress for dinner, the Prince threw himself on a sofa. The drive in the cold air had made him quite drowsy, and in a few minutes he fell into a light nap. While he was sleeping he turned half over, and his pocket-book fell upon the floor. This pocket-book was an exact fac-simile of his cigar-case, according to a custom quite prevalent in Europe at that time.

The entrance of a gentleman, named Stark, awoke the Prince just as Bright had picked up the pocket-book.

“Hulloa!” said Stark, “has the Prince lost his pocket-book?”

The Prince quickly sprang up, and Bright handed it to him with the remark that he had intended taking care of it until the Prince waked up. The Prince thanked him for his kindness, and nothing more was thought about the matter. When the Prince reported the incident to me, however, it suggested a new idea, which was too valuable to be thrown away. The reader will soon discover what this idea was, and how I made use of it.

At dinner the Prince formed the acquaintance of Mr. Hanson, a wealthy real estate dealer. Mr. Hanson belonged to an aristocratic Kentucky family, and consequently, rather looked down on those who had the misfortune to be born in the North. The Prince had met his family the evening before, but had not seen Mr. Hanson until that evening at dinner, when that gentleman sent a glass of wine to him, and saluted him as he drank.

Mr. Bright informed the Prince that the gentleman to whom he had bowed, was Mr. Hanson, who considered himself the most aristocratic gentleman in the house. Mr. Hanson's family consisted of his wife and several daughters, the eldest of whom was a lovely brunette, about sixteen years old, just budding into womanhood.

After dinner the Prince met Miss Pearson in the parlor and was having a pleasant chat about Germany, when Mr. Hanson came up and introduced himself. They conversed together for some time, and then Mr. Hanson took the Prince's arm and strolled through the parlors. As they walked, the Prince spoke of the pleasure of his sleigh-ride that day.

"I don't like sleigh-rides," returned Mr. Hanson. "We don't use sleighs in Kentucky, where I came from. I've made a heap o' money speculatin' in reel estate since I came to Chicago, an' I thought some o' totin' my family over to U-rope next year. By the way, couldn't I manage to borrow a few millions in Bavaria at, say three per cent. per annum? I could invest it here at three per cent. a month."

"No, I think you hardly could, for our Bavaria all her capital needs for — what you call it? — home improofments," replied the Prince.

By this time they had reached Mrs. Hanson and her daughter, who, it may be remarked, *en passant*, were particularly vexed to think that the Pearsons had been the first to appear in public with the Prince. The Hansons and Pearsons were rival aspirants for the leadership of the Clifton House set, and represented respectively the red and the white rose; the brunettes and the blondes.

Mrs. Pearson had spoken of the Prince's kind offer to accompany herself and daughter on a European tour, and Mrs. Hanson was determined to succeed equally well with His Highness. Hence, she addressed him with her most languid and would-be aristocratic air :

“ Oh ! Herr Lindeman — as you will persist in calling yourself — you have no idea how I long to visit Germany. It must be such a beautiful country. How I dote on that lovely poem, ‘ Bingen on the Rhine ! ’ I should so like you to hear my daughter repeat it. Ever since I first read about Germany I have had a longing to visit it. You must know I am of a very poetical temperament. I think a great deal of poetry, and music, and painting, and art, and — and — such things. Now, my poor husband here — heigh-ho ! all he cares for is to run after corner-lots. He doesn't drag his business into the parlor, however, as so many people do. It is *so vulgar*, the way some folks are always talking about business. *My* wish is to be acquainted with European courts.” Saying which, Mrs. Hanson looked most bewitchingly at the Prince.

At this moment she saw the Pearsons approaching, evidently intent on carrying off the Prince, and she, therefore, executed a brilliant manœuvre right under the guns of the enemy.

“ Herr Lindeman, won't you play for us ? ” she asked. “ You do play so divinely. I am a great lover of music, and Annie is, also.”

“ Yes,” replied the Prince ; “ it will give me pleasure to play if your daughter will sing.”

“ I am not a good singer,” said Miss Hanson ; “ but if my singing will induce you to play, I offer myself a will-

ing sacrifice," and taking the Prince's arm, she walked to the piano before the Pearsons could get within speaking distance.

"There," said Mrs. Hanson to her husband, "didn't I manage that well? All the company are looking, and I think I served those upstart Pearsons just about right. Who are they, anyhow? Her husband was only a dealer in fancy notions, and she has the presumption to put herself on a level with old Kentucky families, like us."

The Prince and Miss Hanson played and sang together the whole evening, and when they parted it was with evident regret. Miss Hanson was very fascinating, and she seemed to have exercised her powers on the Prince with telling effect. Mrs. Hanson remarked the next day:

"Our girl is very much in love with the Prince, and he with her. He told her yesterday that he was passionately fond of brunettes."

Who would have thought such a change could have been wrought in a few hours? It was only the morning previous that the Prince had told Miss Pearson that he cared *only for blondes!*

CHAPTER VIII.

THE company in the parlor dispersed about eleven o'clock. The Prince and several other young gentlemen, including Bright, went up to Mr. Robinson's room to try some fine liquor which he had just received. Bright was in high spirits, and was dressed with unusual care. The Prince judged from his manner that he did not wish to remain long, and concluded that he probably intended going to Bill Gardner's faro bank to spend a few hours. The Prince was so confident that Bright was going out somewhere, that he excused himself from the party for a few minutes, got his hat and cloak, and slipped out of the hotel by the side door on Wabash avenue.

The reader familiar with Old Chicago, will recollect that the Clifton House was situated on the corner of Wabash avenue and Madison street, the principal entrance being on the last-named street. My office was on the corner of Washington and Dearborn streets, only three blocks distant.

On reaching the front of the hotel, the Prince could see nothing of the "shadow" whose duty it was to follow Bright. He knew, however, that he would be sure to find some of my men sleeping in the office. So he hurried over on a keen run. He was agreeably surprised to find Mr. Bangs, my General Superintendent, in the office. On hearing the Prince's suspicions that Bright was going out

for the night, Bangs called up McCarthy, a shrewd, quick-witted "shadow," gave him a full description of Bright's personal appearance, and ordered him to watch the Clifton House. When a young gentleman answering to that description, came out, McCarthy was to follow him. Another young man might come out and point out Bright to the "shadow," but whether he was pointed out or not, Bright must be followed in case he left the hotel. (I had been careful not to let any of my other detectives know anything about the *soi-disant* prince, as it was not necessary that they should know anything.)

McCarthy hurried to the Clifton House and took a position where he could watch both entrances. The Prince had already returned and joined his jovial companions in Robinson's room. At a quarter past twelve, the Prince excused himself from the party on the plea of fatigue, and went to his room. Bright remarked at the same time that he would like to have a quiet smoke, and also withdrew. In a few minutes he left the house, wearing a heavy overcoat, and having his face partly concealed by a warm muffler. The night was very dark, but as he passed out of the gas-lighted hall, McCarthy got a good look at him, and felt sure that it was his man. To make assurance doubly sure, however, the "shadow" stopped Bright under a street lamp, and asked the way to Lake street. Having thus satisfied himself of his correctness, McCarthy kept Bright in sight until they reached the Court House square. There Bright took a hack, and was driven across the bridge to the North Side. McCarthy seated himself comfortably behind, and only jumped off when he saw the hackman was slacking his speed. The

carriage then drew up in front of a well-known house of ill-fame, kept by Madam Hatch, the proprietress of the most elegant house of that character in the city. Bright got out, paid the hackman, and entered the house. The fact that he had discharged the hackman was evidence that he intended to spend the night. McCarthy, therefore, returned to my office, and reported to Mr. Bangs, who ordered him to go back to the North Side and watch Madam Hatch's house all night.

Bangs then came directly to my house, on Adams street, and asked my advice. I told him that, late as it was, he had better call immediately on Madam Hatch, and inquire the name of the young gentleman who had called at her house early that morning; also to find out all that she knew with regard to him. Accordingly, Mr. Bangs drove to Madam Hatch's. It was two o'clock when he arrived there, but Madam was still up. Business was brisk, the champagne had been circulating freely, and she was in the best of humors.

She greeted Bangs cordially, and readily granted him a private interview. He then told her that he had come, at my request, to learn what she knew of the young gentleman who had arrived there about one o'clock that night. He proceeded to describe the man, but had not gone far in his description, before she said:

“Oh! I know whom you mean. If Mr. Pinkerton will promise never to divulge the source of his information, I will tell all that I know of him.”

Bangs gave his pledge that she should never be known in connection with the case, and she continued:

“The man to whom you refer is Mr. Bright. He brought

a St. Louis girl here, about three months ago, and he pays all her expenses most liberally. I know you can't be after him. Mr. Pinkerton makes mistakes as often as other men, and he could not make a greater mistake than to be suspicious of Bright. He is one of the most perfect gentlemen I have ever met. He spends his money freely, and his girl gets all she wants. She has one of the finest wardrobes of any girl in the city, and only the other day he brought her a magnificent brown silk. No, no; Mr. Pinkerton can have no cause to suspect him."

"It seems a clear case of mistaken identity," said Bangs; "and I agree with you, that Mr. Pinkerton has made a mistake. By-the-by, does Bright call often?"

"Oh! yes; he is a fine fellow, and never neglects his girl. He is always here three or four times a week, and often takes her out for a drive. She is a splendid girl, and I know several gentlemen who are dying to pay her attention, but she will have nothing to do with them. She is afraid of Bright, and it would not do to have reports brought to his ears. He is so liberal that it would be folly for her to risk losing him. He is talking of going to New Orleans, and will take her with him."

"He must be a fine catch for a good girl," said Bangs. "There is evidently a mistake in suspecting him. Won't you take some champagne, Madam Hatch?"

Champagne was something which the Madam was never known to refuse, so she hurried off to get a bottle. On returning, she playfully allowed the cork to pop into Bangs' face, and filled two large goblets with the sparkling fluid. The shallow champagne glasses then in fashion were not at all to Madam's taste.

"What business is young Bright engaged in?" asked Bangs, as he sipped his wine.

"He is not in business at all," said the Madam. "His father is a wealthy dry-goods merchant of New York, and he has sent his son to Chicago to see the world for a time before going into business. The old gentleman keeps Ed. liberally supplied with money, in order, I suppose, to let him sow his wild oats here, before coming home to settle down to steady habits. Beyond looking after his father's customers in Chicago, he seems to have nothing to do. Sometimes he comes here with a party of gentlemen, but he never lets them see his girl. He always stays around until they retire, before going to her room."

"This is fine champagne," said Bangs, looking at it critically, while mentally pronouncing it rather fair cider. "Bright is a fortunate young man."

Then finishing his glass, he added:

"There is no doubt that Mr. Pinkerton is mistaken this time. How much for the champagne? What, only five dollars! Why, you will ruin yourself selling such a fine article at that price," and paying the amount, Mr. Bangs came away.

He met McCarthy outside, and relieved him from watching any further, until eight o'clock next morning. About eight o'clock McCarthy was again on hand, and when Bright came out, about an hour later, the "shadow" saw him safely inside the doors of the Clifton House, before coming to the office to report. As Bright entered the hotel, he passed the Prince, who was in the hall, but he hurried to his room, without stopping to speak.

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN I had heard McCarthy's report, I called Mr. Bangs into my private office and learned what had taken place at Madam Hatch's. I then sat musing some time, and at length said :

" Bangs, I rather think we shall tree the coon before long. By the way, has Sharp reported yet? What did he make out of that washerwoman?"

I had put Sharp on the track of Bright's washerwoman to see whether something might not be discovered about the stolen underclothing.

" No," said Bangs, " he hasn't made out anything yet. He only observed a colored girl cutting some shirts shorter and hemming them."

" What!" said I, starting up, " you think that isn't anything? Well, I think it everything. The shirts which were stolen had a large letter H in the lower corner. If Sharp had only got me one of those pieces with an H on it, I should have asked nothing more."

" Well," said Bangs, " Sharp was unable to get any of the clippings, but he may be able to get a piece yet. He overheard the woman tell the girl to cut off just two inches."

" I am sorry he did not succeed," I replied, " but Sharp is a good man and may do better if he tries again. This case begins to work up nicely. You know, Bangs, I am a

firm believer in first impressions ; I seldom have to abandon them. The first impression I get always takes fast hold of me, and in nine cases out of ten it proves to be correct. The first time I laid eyes on Bright, I felt that he was the thief, and now I am convinced of it. All we shall have to do is to wait, and the Prince will draw him out."

In the course of the morning the Prince strolled down town and met Mr. Beaver, a wealthy banker, who boarded at the Clifton House. They met in the vicinity of the Tremont House, and Mr. Beaver greeted the Prince very heartily. He invited his distinguished friend to visit his bank, which was close by. The Prince had just come out of Bill Gardner's faro bank, but thought best to say nothing of this visit to a rival establishment.

Mr. Beaver gave the Prince a full description of the methods of banking in this country, and modestly called attention to the superior character of his own banking facilities. He concluded by asking the Prince to drive out with Mrs. Beaver and her daughters in the afternoon. The Prince had no other engagement, and expressed himself as most pleased to accept the invitation.

Mr. Beaver was the happy father of three marriageable daughters, and though he was a great advocate of republican principles, it was possible that he would not have objected to giving one of the young ladies in marriage to a wealthy prince.

After dinner the Beaver family sleigh drove up to the main entrance of the hotel. The Prince assisted Mrs. Beaver and the young ladies into the sleigh, and then took a seat beside the eldest Miss Beaver. As they drove

off, the attentions of the three beautiful young brunettes and the admiring looks of their mamma were so overpowering as almost to abash even the Prince, ready man of the world though he was; but their lively conversation soon put him at his ease. The subject of their remarks was European aristocracy, with which, of course, he was perfectly familiar, and they lamentably ignorant; hence he was able to give them a great deal of entertaining information relative to the pleasures of court life.

The young ladies said that their mamma intended taking them to Europe in the summer, but that their papa was so much bound up in business that he might remain behind. The Prince gave Mrs. Beaver a most cordial invitation to visit his father when they went to Bavaria, and said that he would write to his father on the subject immediately. He then proceeded to describe the grand old palace which had been in the possession of his family for many generations. He pictured in glowing colors its architectural beauties and its massive construction; its walls, hung with the richest Gobelin tapestry; its art gallery, filled with priceless gems of painting and sculpture; its grand old halls, which, in former days, had rung with the songs and shouts of his mailed ancestors and their loyal vassals; and lastly, the noble park surrounding the castle, where the huntsman's horn so often had echoed in the chase of the deer or the wild boar.

Then the Prince gave an account of the reception of the King of Bavaria at the castle, just before the departure of Prince Beauharnais for the Crimea. The illumination of the castle and park was a sight for a lifetime. The grounds were one flood of light, so arranged as to

produce the most picturesque and enchanting effects. The crest of the range of hills encircling the valley in which the palace was situated, was crowned with a continuous line of flame, while the distant hill-sides were dotted with elegant designs of immense size, representing fountains, trees, castles, and ships, all in fire. From the park gates to the grand entrance to the castle, a steady stream of carriages stretched continuously, depositing their loads of titled visitors rapidly and without perceptible delay. His vivid memory enabled him to describe some of the exquisite toilets worn by the ladies, their jewels and costly laces. He also drew heavily upon his recollection—I had almost said imagination—for the gorgeous uniforms and court dresses worn by the gentlemen of the royal household. He concluded by mentioning the grand orchestra of one hundred master musicians, who played the beautiful German waltzes so irresistibly that the mere memory of them was enough to make one wish to dance.

It is needless to say that the Prince's graphic description completely fascinated the Beavers, and made him almost an object of adoration in their sight. The grandest entertainments they had ever attended paled into utter insignificance before those which must be matters of common occurrence in the circle of nobility to which the Prince belonged. They only wondered that the Prince could ever have torn himself away from such delightful society; that he was able to exist in the plebeian atmosphere of Chicago, was truly surprising. He certainly was a most finished gentleman, the young ladies thought, besides being so very fascinating in his conversation and

manners. Whether they would have formed the same opinion of him had they known his real social status is a question I leave the reader to determine.

After a delightful drive of two hours, the party returned to the hotel in fine spirits. The Prince escorted the ladies to their apartments and then walked down to the office.

CHAPTER X.

ON entering the office, the Prince met Bright, who was smoking a cigar, as usual. Bright said that he had been looking for his friend for some time, as he wanted to have a quiet talk. They accordingly took seats in a corner of the smoking-room, where they would be unobserved.

“I wanted to see whether you would like to go to a masquerade ball, to-morrow night,” said Bright. “It will be a very fine affair, and only gentlemen of known respectability can obtain tickets, so that there will be no disorderly nor glaringly disreputable characters there. It is intended to be a thoroughly respectable ball, and it will be attended by many ladies in good society; but there will be just enough of a sprinkling of girls who are a little inclined to be fast, to make it lively. Wouldn’t you like me to get you a ticket?”

“Yes,” replied the Prince, “I should much like to go.” “We will have a jolly time together,” said Bright. “What costume shall you wear?”

“I haf but little time a costume to prepare. What can I get ready-made?”

“Well,” said Bright, “I saw a uniform at the costumer’s where my suit is making, which I think would just about suit you. It was a very resplendent affair, and you could call yourself a Bavarian general. The man could easily

alter it for you, and add such insignia of rank as are worn in the Bavarian service. You could step in there to-morrow morning, and give the directions. He can easily make the alterations before night."

"Yes, I think that would suit me," said the Prince.
"What costume shall you wear?"

"Oh! I am going as a lawyer, with bag, wig and gown. I think I can play the part pretty well, and the disguise will be perfect. By the way, Prince, I will introduce you to a young lady who will be glad to accompany you, and who will be a lively companion."

"Very well, *mein freund*, order me a ticket, a costume, a carriage, a young lady, and everything else that is necessary. Myself I place at your disposal. Now I go to dress for dinner." So saying, the Prince went to his room.

In the evening, the Prince joined the company assembled in the parlor, and, as usual, was a bone of contention among the rival belles. The Hansons, the Pearsons, and the Beavers were out in full force, each endeavoring, by a series of delicate strategic movements, to out-maneuvre the others, and capture the Prince. The star of the Beaver beauties was rather in the ascendant, as they had had possession of him all the afternoon; but they desired to monopolize him for the evening also. They had already informed everyone in the room that the Prince had invited them to pay a visit to his father in Bavaria, and that he was going to give them letters of introduction to Prince Beauharnais, the elder, and to various other titled persons in Germany. They could not help showing their elation at their great good fortune, and in many ways assumed

such important manners as to irritate all the other ladies in the room.

When the Prince entered the parlor, he first encountered Mrs. and Miss Hanson, who quickly engaged him in conversation. Before they could mature any plan to retain possession of their prize, however, Mr. Beaver entered the door behind the Prince, who had not yet seated himself. He saw the latter bending over Mrs. Hanson and her daughter, while beyond, he saw his own wife and daughters casting despairing looks at the trio before him. Comprehending the situation at a glance, he determined to carry off the Prince before Mrs. Hanson could arrange another such a musical party as the one of the previous evening. He, therefore, stepped up to the Prince, slapped him familiarly on the shoulder, and said, jocularly :

“Prince, I have a favor to ask of you. Couldn’t you manage to secure an introduction for my wife and daughters to King Maximilian, of Bavaria ? ”

“ I haf no doubt that I could so do,” replied the Prince, politely. “ A presentation day comes twice by a month, at which I or my father could have your charming family presented.”

Mr. Beaver was perfectly overjoyed. It never occurred to him that the American minister at Munich could have presented his family just as well ; but he now felt that they would make the European tour under the most aristocratic auspices, and he was highly elated at the prospect. In the excess of his happiness, he grasped the Prince’s arm, and said :

“ Won’t you favor us with some music, Prince ? If you will, I will have my daughter sing with you.”

It was impossible to decline, and the Prince was soon securely anchored on the piano stool, with one of the fair Beavers to keep possession of him. The inexpressible wrath of Mrs. Hanson, who thus saw her own tactics used against her, must be imagined; I confess my total inability to do justice to the subject. For the remainder of the evening the Beavers stood guard over the Prince. There had been, already, some considerable dissension in the ranks of the Beaver family, as to which of the young ladies was entitled to the credit of having attracted the Prince's attentions, and the younger girls were disposed to dispute the elder's claim to all of his society. Hence, no matter where the Prince went that evening, he was sure to be under convoy of one of the omnipresent Beavers. He was forced to admit to me that, as far as perseverance went, they were not only Beavers by name, but beavers by nature.

In spite of all the attentions paid him, however, the Prince did not relax his vigilant watch, and at one time he discovered that Bright was not in the room. He immediately went to the front door, on the plea of looking at the weather; but seeing one of my "shadows" on duty he returned to the custody of the Beavers. In about an hour, Bright came in, but soon went out again, and remained nearly half an hour. Nearly all the boarders were in the parlors, hence the Prince concluded that Bright had been down in the bar-room.

It was nearly twelve o'clock before the party broke up, and as the Prince passed out of the parlor, Bright joined him, and dragged him down to the bar-room.

Bright wished to take the Prince out for a lark, but as

the latter had no desire to "see the elephant," Bright said :

" Well, then, I will take you over to Madam Hatch's, where you can pick out a partner for the ball. You will find many different styles to select from, and the girl you choose will be sure to go."

The Prince tried to avoid going, but Bright was so persistent that he, at length, consented. A hack soon took them to Madam Hatch's door, where Bright was about to dismiss the hackman, but the Prince interfered. It would be beneath his dignity, he said, to pass the night in such a house, and, therefore, he wished the hack to remain. Bright stammered in a confused way, begged the Prince's pardon, and told the driver to remain, as they should be out in a few moments. They then entered the house.

In the parlor they found a number of handsome women, who, it is hardly necessary to state, belonged to the *demi-monde*. They were of the higher class of such women, many of them being well-educated and accomplished. Bright ordered champagne for the party, and the young men remained some little time, chatting with the girls, and sipping their wine. Bright then made another *faux pas*, by asking the Prince to play. The latter's pride would not permit him to comply with the request in such society, so he politely begged to be excused.

After a time the Prince designated the girl he wished to accompany him to the ball, and she promised to be ready to go, when he called, the next night.

" But what lady go you with ? " the Prince asked Bright.

" Oh ! she does not live here," he replied. " You will see her to-morrow night."

This showed the Prince that Bright did not wish anyone, whosoever, to see his fair mistress.

Having remained in all nearly an hour, they took their leave, and re-entered the hack. They had gone but a short distance when Bright made the hackman stop. He said that he had a message for one of the girls, which he had forgotten to deliver, and that he would go back for that purpose. He told the Prince not to wait, and the latter, therefore, returned to the Clifton House alone. Bright had been "shadowed" by McCarthy, and when he got out of the carriage, he was seen to go straight to Madam Hatch's, where he spent the night.

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER breakfast the next morning, the Prince was astonished to hear that Mr. Blair, who roomed only two doors from him, had been robbed during the night. Mr. Blair had retired late, and in consequence, had slept late the next morning. On awakening, he had sprung up and commenced dressing hurriedly. He had gone to his bureau for a clean shirt, and had instantly discovered that he had been robbed. His loss consisted of about one hundred and fifty dollars in coin, a gold watch and chain, and a valuable diamond ring, a present from a lady. Mr. Blair had immediately made known his misfortune, and the Prince was again a wondering spectator of one of the weekly excitements of American hotel life.

Mr. Blair finally rushed off to find the members of the committee, who had gone to their respective places of business. He soon brought them together and told his tale of woe. They all felt highly incensed and came swooping down upon me like eagles on their prey.

"What are you going to do, Mr. Pinkerton?" said one.
"I think it's very strange that you can't catch the thief, with all your experience," said another.

"If you don't catch him pretty soon, we shall all leave the Clifton House," chimed in a third.

I bore their scolding as meekly as possible and finally calmed them down by assuring them that I was actively

engaged in working up the case. I begged them to keep quiet and to rest assured that I was doing everything in my power to ferret out the guilty party. I told them that I had hopes of detecting the thief within the coming week, but that they must have patience and not expect a detective to be omnipotent and omnipresent. They finally departed in a somewhat less unreasonable frame of mind.

During the forenoon the Prince came to my office and related his experience with the Beavers. I paid little attention to this, as their conduct was about what I had expected it to be, but I asked him how Bright had acted during the evening.

"Oh! he twice the room left, once staying an hour or more," replied the Prince.

"Was the number of people in the parlor large?" I asked.

"Yes," he answered, "there were much people present. Nearly all the boarders were in the room and many of their friends from the outside. I was to many strangers introduced, but I could not much say to them, as the Beavers always drew me off."

"Was it while the room was crowded that Bright was away?" I asked.

"Yes, but I could not find to where he went. I saw a detectif outside, so I thought he had not gone away."

The Prince then went out to prepare for the masquerade, and left me to think over his report.

"Strange!" I said to myself. "It is barely possible that I may be mistaken, but I feel sure that Bright is the thief. Could it have been possible for him to slip off,

while everyone was in the parlor, and commit that robbery? If he did it, that was his only opportunity, as he spent the night at Madam Hatch's after twelve o'clock. If the robbery took place after that hour, Bright must be innocent of that crime, at all events. Well, I must have patience; it won't do to be in a hurry."

I then called Mr. Bangs into my private office.

"Bangs," I said, "I wish you to write to New York in order to learn all we can about Mr. Bright, senior. Try to find out why he keeps his son, young Ed. Bright, so much away from home. We may need this information soon, don't you think so?"

"We might learn something relative to the young man's character that would be of use," Bangs replied.

"Then please write to my New York correspondent—Robert Boyer—and tell him to look up Mr. Bright. Let him find out how that gentleman stands in commercial circles and in society. I think it might be well to put a 'shadow' at work, to get in with the servants and discover why young Bright does not live at home. Servants always know a great deal more about family matters than their employers are aware of. If Bright's servants are Irish, Boyer might put Lynch on that duty; you know he served on my force some time, and we can depend upon him."

"Yes," said Bangs, "he will be just the man to do that work. I will dictate a letter to Boyer immediately."

About two o'clock, I was hurriedly summoned to Mr. Beaver's bank. As I entered the door, Mr. Beaver seized me by the arm with a nervous, trembling grasp, and drew me into his private office.

"Pinkerton," he said, "some scoundrel got into the Clifton House last night and stole all my family's jewelry and two hundred dollars in cash. This forenoon Mrs. Beaver wished to make some purchases for the girls, as they are going out driving this afternoon with a Bavarian prince, who is stopping at the Clifton, but on going to her desk to get some money, she found not only all the money gone, but also all the jewelry we possess, except a few trinkets the girls wore last evening. The robbery must have been committed during the night, as at dinner-time nothing had been disturbed. I don't care for the money, but I must find the jewelry. It was a very fine collection, and I would not have taken five thousand dollars for it. What shall I do?" he continued, growing more and more excited. "There will be a grand ball at the Clifton in a short time, and positively, my family have nothing to wear."

While he was talking, my mind was, figuratively, running after his jewelry. I felt sure that Bright did not sell it, as that would be too difficult a matter for him and too dangerous. The fact that the trinkets worn by the Beaver girls during the previous evening had not been stolen, satisfied me that Bright was the thief, and that he had committed both robberies while absent from the parlor on the two occasions noticed by the Prince. Now, if he did not sell the jewelry, what did he do with it? I decided that he must be in the habit of taking all jewelry and similar articles to the woman whom he was keeping at Madam Hatch's. Of course, she knew that it was stolen, but she probably intended, in case of Bright's detection, to escape with all his presents, since

hardly anyone knew her relations to Bright. These were the thoughts which flashed through my mind as I listened to Mr. Beaver, but I merely said :

"I will hunt up your jewelry as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, don't mention your loss, and I have no doubt that I shall succeed in recovering it."

"Do you suppose I shall keep quiet?" he asked, angrily. "I shall advertise my loss in every newspaper in town. Can't you find out at the pawnbrokers' shops whether any of my jewelry has been offered for sale? I know they would tell you, as you are an old hand in the detective business."

"I can inquire," I replied, "but I have no expectation of learning anything in that direction. The thief will not offer your jewelry for sale in Chicago, you can depend upon that."

"Well, if you can't do anything, I must get some one that can," snarled the irate Beaver. "I must recover my jewelry immediately, as the Prince is very attentive to my daughters, and it will not do for them to appear at parties with him without their jewelry."

I tried my best to calm him down, but without any effect. He had an idea that detectives were omnipotent, and that nothing was easier for them than to recover stolen property when they wished to do so.

"I have sent for the city police," he said, "and they will be here directly. No one at the hotel knows anything of my loss as yet, but all the world shall know it to-morrow. I will have the whole police force at work, if necessary, for I am determined to find my jewelry."

I smiled inwardly as I thought of the way in which

the "whole police force" would assist in the recovery of the stolen property. I was satisfied that the jewelry was safely lodged in the hands of Bright's mistress, and that the police might search every pawnbroker's shop in the city without discovering the least clue. I knew perfectly well that even an offer to compromise for money would be ineffectual, since none of the professional thieves or "fences"** had possession of the stolen articles.

I felt very confident that Madam Hatch was ignorant of Bright's operations. She was a woman possessing many good qualities, and honesty was one of them. Her business was one of the most disreputable character, but she would never tolerate a thief, and I was satisfied that if she should be informed that an inmate of her house was receiving stolen property, she would give me her assistance in recovering it.

I could not convince Mr. Beaver of the folly of making his loss known publicly, and I therefore left him, as he had worked himself into a violent passion.

On entering my office I was surprised to see the Prince awaiting my return. The Misses Beaver had already told him of their loss, and he had hurried out to report it to me. The Beavers had previously made arrangements for the Prince to go driving with them that afternoon, but they were so much excited and distressed that they had been obliged to ask him to excuse them from going. I heard his story and then told him to return to the Clifton House.

I thought to myself, as the Prince went out, that he

*A "fence" is a receiver of stolen goods— one who makes a business of buying stolen property from thieves.

was a pretty good detective. Although he had been surrounded by an admiring crowd the night before, he had noticed Bright's absence from the parlor twice; again, in the morning he had left all the pleasant gaiety of the hotel to come straight to me with a report of the Beaver robbery.

I was now well satisfied that Bright had robbed both Mr. Blair and Mr. Beaver, and I determined to arrange the trap for his capture as soon as I should hear from New York. I was particularly glad that I had written to Boyer to put Lynch at work, as I wished to know something of Bright's past history.

Bright remained about the hotel most of the day. He was rather quiet and subdued, except when speaking of the robberies, and then he became quite indignant. He was very bitter, indeed, and even advocated the formation of a vigilance committee to catch the thief and hang him to the nearest lamp post.

"There is no use in temporizing," he said; "we must make an example of this scoundrel or we shall never have any peace."

Mr. Robinson came into my office in the afternoon to report the Beavers' loss, and to again urge me to hasten my plans for the capture of the criminal. He said that a young man named Josephs had left the hotel that morning, bound for New York. Josephs, he added, was known to be very fond of jewelry, and many of the boarders suspected him of having robbed the Beavers. Mr. Robinson, therefore, wished me to telegraph to New York to have Josephs arrested on his arrival there. I said I had already written to New York, and that if Josephs had taken the jewelry he would surely be arrested.

CHAPTER XII.

THE grand masquerade ball at Metropolitan Hall had been announced a month in advance, and the preparations were such as to insure its complete success. The intention had been that none but persons of acknowledged respectability should be able to obtain tickets. In consequence, it was attended by hundreds of wealthy and fashionable people. To be sure the Clifton House set did not consider it sufficiently exclusive for their fastidious tastes, but this did not prevent large numbers of other members of the *haut ton* from attending, though afterward none of them could be found who would acknowledge having been present. Not that there was anything improper occurred, or that decorum was not strictly observed, but it became known that some of the fair masqueraders were not all they should have been; hence the really respectable ladies who had been present swore their escorts to secrecy, and denied all knowledge of the ball. This was perfectly practicable, since no one had seen their faces, and recognition behind their masks was impossible. Indeed, it was shrewdly surmised that some of the Cliftonian ladies even, had counted upon this fact in advance, and while professing that they would never think of attending a public ball, had, in secret, made up a party expressly to attend this masquerade. Be that as it may, the ball was certainly a great success;

and while the majority of ladies were undoubtedly above suspicion, there was a sufficient attendance of the higher class of the *demi-monde* to make it uncommonly lively.

At nine o'clock the Prince was ready. He had obtained a very rich and showy uniform, which set off his fine figure to great advantage, while his features were entirely concealed by a close-fitting mask. Entering his carriage at the Clifton House, he drove straight to Madam Hatch's, where he found his fair partner impatiently awaiting him.

She was dressed to represent a shepherdess, and was as frisky, and apparently as innocent, as the young lambs which she was supposed to take care of. She had been influenced in her choice of costume by the extreme shortness of her dress—at both ends. In fact, as the young lady in question rarely had an opportunity to show herself in public, she was determined that, on this occasion, people should *see as much of her as possible*, and it must be acknowledged that she succeeded.

As she was all ready when the Prince arrived, he handed her into the carriage, and in a short time they were mingling with the gay throng of miscellaneous characters in Metropolitan Hall.

In about half an hour, Bright arrived with his partner. He wore the bag, wig and gown of an English chancery solicitor, while she was dressed as Diana, the goddess of the chase. The correctness of their costumes, the ease with which they acted their parts, and the exceptionally beautiful form of the lady, caused a murmur of admiration to greet them as they moved about the hall. She wore a close-fitting corselet, made of fine scales of gold, cut square and low in the neck, with a narrow band going

over each shoulder. Her magnificent arms were wholly bare, and the snowy whiteness of her matchless neck and bust was unrivaled. She carried a light bow in her left hand, and a quiver of arrows hung over her left shoulder, though she soon laid these articles aside as inconvenient in dancing. She wore a light tiara of gold filagree-work, which gave a regal poise to her elegantly shaped head; and her whole carriage was queenly and commanding.

Another of the belles who attracted much attention was a representative of Winter. She wore a white satin dress, cut very low, both in front and back, with a very long, trailing skirt. The top of the corsage was trimmed with long, glass pendants, which were exact representations of icicles. Her arms were bare; the puffed bands which took the place of sleeves, being trimmed with soft, white eider-down. Around every flounce of the skirt ran a light vine of ivy leaves, with little clusters of red holly berries at intervals. Her hair was dressed in the prevailing fashion, but was powdered to a snowy whiteness. She wore a light and graceful coronet of thorn ivy, set with red holly berries, the same as those on the skirt. Over all the dress was draped a mass of transparent, silk gauze, upon which was fastened a great number of tufts of new Sea-island cotton, in imitation of flakes of snow.

A Turkish costume also excited much admiration. The wearer was a petite brunette, of exquisite proportions and graceful carriage. Her undervest was of purple satin, richly embroidered, and trimmed around the throat with costly and delicate lace. The bosom was cut V-shaped, the opening being continued to the waist, and filled in, also, with lace, below the top of the embroidered chemise

Over this vest she wore a light, floating garment, with close-fitting sleeves, reaching to the wrist, where they terminated in lace ruffles. The body was cut away in a quick curve from the throat, on each side, leaving the undervest wholly exposed in front, while behind, this over-dress fell nearly to the floor, like a cavalier's cloak. Her lower limbs were clothed in full Turkish trousers, fastened about the waist with a voluminous scarf, or sash, of soft material, which was wound in quite a number of folds above her hips. These trousers were fastened just below the knee, but they fell, in a loose, easy fold, nearly to the ankle. She wore clocked silk stockings, and beautifully embroidered, yellow satin slippers, turning up to a point at the toes. A very light, white turban was on her head, from which hung a long, white veil, which completely concealed her features, except her eyes. This veil was worn only on making her *entree*, and was soon removed for convenience, the face being still concealed by a mask.

These were three of the most striking of the costumes, though there were many scores of others which would merit description, if space permitted. As far as dress was concerned, there certainly had never been before in Chicago a masquerade of equal elegance and style.

The Prince had been instructed to watch Bright's partner closely, and to obtain a view of her face, if possible. He, accordingly, soon lost his unsophisticated young shepherdess in the crowd, and kept his eye upon the goddess Diana. For a long time it seemed as if it would be impossible to speak to her alone. Though she was always an object of admiration to many handsome and agreeable cavaliers, she paid no attention to anyone except Bright,

and the latter seemed determined not to let her go out of his sight. At length, however, he was dragged away to plead a case, and Diana, for the first time, was left alone. The Prince saw that this would probably be his only chance to find out who she was, hence he resolved to carry her by storm. He knew how fond all the *demi-monde* are of admiration, and, therefore, decided to address her in a strain of fervent flattery, and to pretend that he was desperately in love with her. He had no time to lose, so, walking up to her, he whispered in her ear:

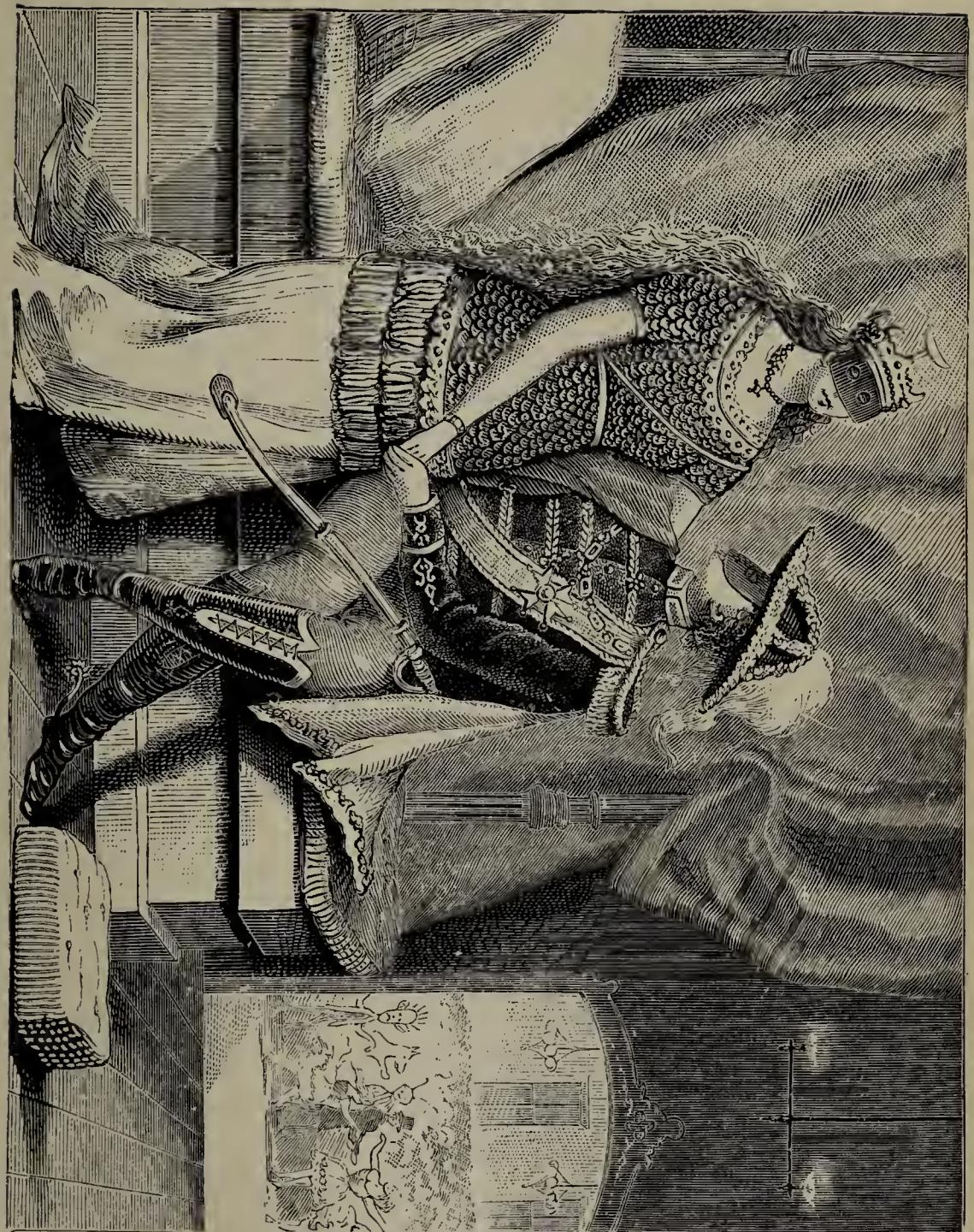
“Oh! beautiful Diana, a word with thee.”

“What dost thou wish?” she said, starting, as she saw the handsome figure bending over her.

“I would to thee a word in private speak,” he replied. “If thou wouldst not drive thy true adorer to despair, grant my request.”

She hesitated a moment, glanced around, as if looking for some one, and then, taking the Prince’s arm, she accompanied him to a side room, which was connected with the ball-room by a door at each end. The Prince saw that Bright was nowhere in the vicinity, and that the room was unoccupied. He then addressed his companion in the impassioned tones of an ardent lover:

“You must, indeed, have thought my request strange; but will you pardon me when I say—I love you. Oh! forgive me, but I can help it not. The moment when you the hall entered, I felt that I was doomed. Every movement is such grace! Every feature is such perfection! I had never seen your face, but I love you, I adore you. I had within me that which tells me behind your mask is a face of beauty. Oh! lovely Diana, raise this mask, and



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let me upon your features look. See! on my knee, I implore this favor."

"No, no," she answered hurriedly. "I was not to raise my mask. You know not what you ask."

"Pardon me, sweet Diana, but do not refuse me my request. Little will it cost to you; but to me great pleasure it will give."

"But, my lord, I promised not to raise my mask to any one," she answered, in an undecided tone.

"Oh! most cruel Diana!" urged the Prince, seizing her hand. "I cannot—will not leave you until your sweet face I see." Saying which, he kissed her hand passionately, without rebuke.

"Prince," she said, (with the air of one who had held out as long as could reasonably be expected,) "I know who you are. Bright has told me all about you, and I have been dying to see you. I am as anxious to see your face as you are to see mine, so, if you will unmask, I will, also."

The Prince instantly removed his mask, saying:

"Oh! charming goddess, can it possible be that you know and care for me? Oh! this is bliss indeed."

As he spoke, the lady also took off her mask, revealing a face of such rare beauty as positively to startle the Prince for an instant. Her complexion was of that exquisite, creamy softness which is so unusual, and it was plain that she was not indebted to either paint or powder for its perfection. Her forehead was low and broad, and was crowned by the delicate filagree-work of her coronet. Her eyes were large and heavily fringed with dark brown lashes. Their color was a luminous gray, growing darker or lighter

according to her moods. Her eyebrows had the perfect arch, and her nose the straight contour of the Grecian statues, such as Phidias and Praxiteles loved to create. Her chin was just prominent enough in its rounding outline to give character to the face without spoiling the exquisite oval, while her cheeks were full and tender. Her mouth was a perfect Cupid's bow, and the tempting, rosy lips contained evidence of a passionate willingness to be kissed which was perfectly irresistible. At least, it was so to the Prince, who drew her to a seat beside him, and closed her lips with kisses, which she returned with equal ardor.

She was the first to speak :

"Oh ! Prince, this is happiness. I could travel to the end of the world with you. But, for heaven's sake, don't let Bright know of this, nor suspect it. He would kill me if he knew of it. I can fool him, though. I love you and will manage to meet you alone some evening. You were at Madam Hatch's last night, and I tried to see you, but was afraid of Bright. He came back after he went away with you. He keeps me at Madam Hatch's, but he never lets any of his friends see me. How I hate him ! He is a miserable cur, while you are so handsome, so manly. With what feelings of delight shall I remember this evening ! How little I thought, when I came, that your arms would be around me—your lips press mine ! My name is Mamie Liston. Please call me 'Mamie'; it will sound so sweet from your lips."

"Mamie, darling Mamie," said the Prince, as he took her hand and drew a large diamond ring from her finger, "let me this ring take to dream upon. If you to me true

will be, you will find me to you always true," and he slipped the ring on his own finger.

"If you could only dream such dreams as I could wish, you would, indeed, dream well of me. I hate the life I lead here. When you go away, take me with you. How I should like to see the world with you!"

As the Prince was about to reply, he glanced through one of the doorways and saw Bright, evidently in search of his mistress, approaching the room.

"Here comes Bright!" he said, hastily putting on his mask. She also replaced her's and said:

"Oh! dear! what shall I do? He will be sure to find us here alone, and I am afraid to meet him."

"You slip out of one door as he the other enters. Mix with the crowd and I will here detain him for a time," said the Prince.

Accordingly, just as Bright entered the room by one door, Mamie passed out by the door at the other end, which also led into the ball-room. He came up to the Prince and said:

"I thought I saw a lady in here, Prince. Who was she?"

"I saw her not well," said the Prince, "as I haf not my glasses. She seemed for some one to be looking."

"Ah! you're a sly dog," said Bright, familiarly, evidently thinking that the Prince had been having a flirtation which he wished to keep secret. "However, it's no affair of mine. Have you seen my partner, the goddess Diana, lately? I have lost her," he continued, entirely unsuspecting that the Prince's companion had been his own charmer.

"I saw the lady at the other end of the hall a little while ago," said the Prince. "She seems to be beautiful, and she is the most elegantly dressed woman here."

"Yes, she has a good figure and dresses well, but her face is quite plain," said Bright, who was alarmed lest the Prince should wish to make her acquaintance.

"Ah! what a pity!" replied the Prince. "I was wishing an introduction to haf, but if she has not the beauty of the face, I prefer much not to see her. Much I always regret to see a beautiful form spoiled by a vicious face."

"'Vicious?' I never said she was vicious," said the astonished Bright, with considerable warmth.

"Ah! I must a blunder haf made," returned the Prince. "You said her face was not beautiful—that is ugly, 'vicious,' is it not? Your pardon I ask if I —"

"Oh! I see," interrupted Bright with a laugh. "You meant 'ugly.' We say an 'ugly' horse, or an 'ugly' dog, when the animal is 'vicious'; and when a woman is the reverse of beautiful, we say also that she is 'ugly'; but a 'vicious' woman is quite another thing. Do you see, Prince?" he continued, laughing.

"My mistake you will excuse, *mein lieber freund*. I must better learn to speak."

"Oh! that's all right," said Bright, good-humoredly, and they then strolled into the ball-room, each being contented with the result of the conversation. The Prince had succeeded in detaining Bright until Mamie was far away at the other end of the hall, while Bright congratulated himself that he had prevented the Prince from asking for an introduction to Mamie. On the whole, it must be confessed that the Prince had rather the advantage.

In about an hour, the Prince told Bright that he was slightly unwell, and would, therefore, retire. While looking for his partner, a young page handed him a note, written on the back of a ball programme. The only words were:

“ Ten o’clock to-morrow evening.”

There was no signature, but he knew that it was from Mamie, so, on passing her, he held up the note and bowed his acceptance of the invitation. She nodded to show that she understood, and passed on. The signal and answer were made while Bright’s attention was turned away from Mamie, and he suspected nothing. In a short time the Prince found his short-skirted partner, and, much to her regret, took her away from the brilliant scene. Leaving her at Madam Hatch’s, he drove back to the Clifton House at the comparatively early hour of one o’clock. Bright and his partner remained at the ball until nearly daylight, and then returned to Madam Hatch’s, where Bright retired. He did not make his appearance at the Clifton House until nearly noon.

CHAPTER XIII.

A BOUT ten o'clock the morning after the ball, the Prince came to my office, made his report, and gave me the diamond ring which he had taken from Mamie Liston's finger the night before.

I was delighted at his success in making her acquaintance, and especially at the fact of obtaining the ring.

"Why," I said, as I examined it, "this is a very valuable ring, and from its size, I judge it must have been intended for a gentleman."

The Prince replied that Mamie had invited him to visit her that evening, and that he should have to wear the ring then.

"Well," I replied, "I think I shall soon be able to find its owner and allow you to return it this evening. Probably Bright is pretty well tired out with his night's dissipation, and so will not visit her to-night. She must have calculated on that when she made the appointment with you. When you go there, you must notice carefully all the jewelry she wears, her clothes and the articles of luxury on her toilet-table, etc. But be very careful, for she is, undoubtedly, a sharp girl, and must not be alarmed until we have our nets all around both her and Bright."

I then dismissed the Prince and sent a messenger for Mr. Robinson. The latter was one of those men who can hardly ever keep a secret a day, unless they are first

sworn never to divulge it. On his arrival I impressed upon him the fact that any indiscretion, at this point of my proceedings, would surely destroy the good effect of all my previous work. Indeed, it might enable the thief to escape. I, therefore, made Mr. Robinson give me his solemn pledge never to reveal what I was about to tell him; I then handed him the ring.

"Do you recognize that?" I asked.

"No, but it may belong to the Beavers," he replied.

"What makes you think so?"

"Well, nothing, except that they have just lost some jewelry and have engaged you to recover it. However, on second thoughts, I don't believe this is their's. It seems to me that the ring which Mr. Prussing lost, about eight or nine months ago, was very similar to this one. I can't be certain about it, but this ring strongly reminds me of his."

"Now, Mr. Robinson," I said, "I wish you to take that ring out and try to find the owner. You must lose no time, as I must have it back by six o'clock at the latest. If you succeed, my labors will be very much lightened, and I may be able to recover all the stolen property, or its equivalent in money. Show the ring to Mr. Prussing in a careless way, and say that you are thinking of buying it. If he does not recognize it, show it to any other boarder who has lost a diamond ring. Do not display it publicly, nor mention to anyone that it is stolen property. If you come across the owner, he will recognize it soon enough; you must then pledge him to secrecy, make yourself responsible for the ring, and bring it back to me."

Mr. Robinson promised to follow my instructions and immediately went to the hotel. Just before lunch, he met Mr. Prussing in the hall, on his way to his room.

"Prussing," he said, "you have bought a good many diamonds and ought to be well posted as to their value; I want your opinion of the value of a ring which I have been offered, and which I think of buying," and so saying, he handed the ring to Prussing.

"Why, that's my ring," said the delighted Prussing, as he seized upon it. "Where in the world did you get it? It was stolen from me when these mysterious robberies first began. Tell me where you got it, and perhaps we can catch the thief."

"That is just what I expect to do," replied Robinson. "You must keep perfectly quiet about this, and in a short time we shall recover all our lost articles. I thought it was your ring, and wished to make sure of it."

"But where did it come from?" queried the curious Prussing.

"I do not know where it came from, myself," was Robinson's unsatisfactory answer. "I cannot tell you anything about it, except that the ring must be returned to the person who gave it to me, and I will be responsible for its safe return to you."

Prussing was decidedly averse to any such a proceeding. He had obtained possession of his ring, and not only wished to keep it, but, also, to know all about the way in which it had come into Robinson's hands. It was only by dint of urgent entreaties that Robinson succeeded in getting back the ring and quieting Prussing's insatiate desire for information. The latter was one of

the men who always "want to know, you know," and was driven to the verge of distraction by the fact that Robinson not only positively refused to tell him anything, but also forbade him to mention the subject to anyone else.

On receiving back the ring, with the information that it was one of the articles stolen from the Clifton House, I was fully satisfied of Bright's guilt. It was evident that he had stolen the ring and presented it to Mamie Liston.

The Prince remained in his room most of the day, resting from the fatigues of the previous evening. On going down to dinner, he met Bright, who had also slept all day, part of the time at Madam Hatch's and part in his own room.

"Didn't we have a fine time last night?" said Bright. "I never enjoyed myself more in my life. My partner was the finest woman at the ball. Over fifty gentlemen tried to get her to unmask, but she was true to her promise to me, and indignantly spurned them all."

The Prince listened with becoming gravity and replied:

"Yes, she seemed to be a lovely woman. She is a treasure you ought to appreciate."

Bright suddenly recollected his depreciation of his partner's personal appearance the night before, and hastened to change the subject.

"By the way," he said, "are you going to remain at home all the evening?"

"Yes," replied the Prince, "I feel too tired to go out."

"Well, I am going down to Bill Gardner's to have a little fun. Won't you go along?"

"I think not," said the Prince. "I feel much fatigue."

After dinner the Prince went into the parlor, where he

was soon surrounded by the young ladies, who requested him to describe the ball. His account was very amusing and witty, especially when he endeavored to give accurate descriptions of the various dresses. He was very happy, however, in his modes of expression, and achieved a decided success in his representations of the different characters. He also drew comparisons between this ball and some masquerade balls which he had attended in Europe. His fair audience listened in mute ecstacy, and each one mentally resolved that if another masked ball were given, she would get the Prince to invite her to go. They thought that it *could* not be improper, if a Prince could go.

At the first opportunity, the Prince left the parlor, put on his hat and cloak and took a carriage for Madam Hatch's, to keep his appointment with Mamie Liston. The Madam had been informed of his intended visit, so that, on his arrival, she conducted him immediately to Mamie's room. In doing so, she led him through both parlors in order to give all her girls a chance to see a "real prince." Mamie had told them his rank, so that they had all assembled to get a good look at him as he passed.

He found Mamie awaiting him dressed in a brown silk, trimmed with a quantity of fine lace, which in itself was of great value; but that which most astonished him was, that she was literally almost covered with jewelry. Wherever she could fasten a jewel, she had done so, and she fairly sparkled in the gas-light. From the description which he had received, he was able to recognize Mrs. Beaver's jewelry, and that of several other

boarders in the Clifton House. He remained about an hour and a half, and on leaving, Mamie swore to be eternally true to him. She asked for the ring which he had taken, since she was afraid that Bright would miss it, as she was in the habit of wearing it constantly. He, therefore, returned it, but promised to bring her a larger and finer one when he next came.

In a short time he was again back in the Clifton House parlor, singing and playing for his admiring body-guard of ladies, with more than usual tenderness and effect. Bright stepped up to him for an instant and again asked him whether he would not like to go to Gardner's gambling-rooms, but the Prince declined. He walked to the door, however, and chatted with Bright for a moment, as the latter went out, but seeing that McCarthy was on hand, the Prince returned to the parlor. McCarthy followed Bright to the gambling-rooms and there left him. I had stationed one of my men, named Oakley, inside of Gardner's "bank," and McCarthy knew that Oakley would watch Bright for the rest of the night. Oakley reported next morning that Bright had played desperately all night. At first he had won a great deal, but when he returned to the Clifton House in the morning, he was a heavy loser.

CHAPTER XIV.

FOR a day or two everything went quietly at the Clifton House, but the third day was an uncommonly lively one. The weather was very windy and snowy, but a great many guests arrived at intervals during the day, and the clerks were kept busy in showing them to their rooms, etc. About five o'clock in the afternoon, the second clerk entered the office and found the safe door unlocked and standing open. He had been called away a few moments before and had merely closed the safe door, without locking it. He looked hastily into the money drawer and found that all the contents, amounting to over two hundred dollars, had been stolen. There had been several thousand dollars in the safe that afternoon, but fortunately it had been deposited in bank before three o'clock.

Nothing was said about the loss until after dinner, though the landlord immediately sent for me and for the city police. In less than half an hour I had made an inspection of the office, questioned the clerks, and learned all there was to be learned. While I was so engaged, the city police also came in, so that when the Prince and other boarders came down to dinner, they were informed of this new direction to the thief's efforts. It must be acknowledged that the landlord received little sympathy. The boarders discussed the matter at dinner-table, and

agreed that, now that the landlord himself had become a sufferer, he might possibly succeed in protecting them.

In this connection it may be stated that the landlord was, certainly, a unique specimen of the hotel proprietor. He was probably as capable in his business as any man in the country ; hence his house was always well filled. But he was as independent and autocratic in his ways as the Czar of all the Russias. He never appeared desirous to conciliate any one, and the threat of leaving the house had no effect upon him whatever. It was owing to this peculiarity that he had hitherto allowed the boarders to organize for their own protection, instead of employing me, or some other detective, himself.

After I had completed my investigation, I told the landlord that I did not see what I could do. No one had been seen entering or leaving the office ; the money which had been in the safe was now gone, and it could not be identified even if found. It was a case of mysterious disappearance ; there was nothing but guess-work to go upon, and he was probably just as good a guesser as I was.

“Some person in the house is the thief,” he said, “and my suspicions point to the servants ; I should like to have you investigate the matter fully.”

“I will do what I can,” I replied, as I took my departure, “but I fear it will be very little.”

Suspicion had settled on the servants, and within the next three days, over a dozen of them were discharged. *The mere possibility* of having taken the money from the safe was sufficient to cause the discharge of any servant who had happened to be anywhere in the vicinity of the

office that afternoon. It certainly was very unjust treatment, since a discharge under such circumstances was equivalent to a direct accusation, yet the accused had no opportunity to vindicate themselves.

Suspicion—how I hate it! I never act upon my first impressions, (though they have generally proved correct,) until I have collected positive proofs of guilt. Now, in this case, I said to myself, the first time I saw Bright: "There is something suspicious about that young man." I never stated my impressions to anyone, however, nor did I injure his reputation in any way. Even when I discovered certain facts which were very damaging to his good character, I did not expose him. I merely kept a close watch upon him, determined to obtain a *positive proof* of his guilt before taking any steps against him.

In a day or two I received a letter from Robert Boyer, my New York agent. He reported that Bright, senior, was at the head of a large dry-goods house there, and that he was reputed to be a millionaire. His family consisted of his wife, three sons and two daughters, all of whom, (except Edward, who was in Chicago,) lived with him in a handsome house on Fifth avenue, near Thirty-second street. Edward Bright was his mother's darling, but he was said to be very dissipated and worthless. Lynch had been put at work, according to my suggestion, and as soon as anything further was discovered, he would write to me.

Meanwhile the Prince was having a glorious time. He smoked the best cigars, drank the finest liquors, attended hops and parties, played, sang, and made love to the young ladies. He had the tact to distribute his attentions so equally that he could not be accused of being

devoted to one lady; and in this way, by keeping up the interest of them all, he remained a general favorite. Whereas, had he allowed one charmer to monopolize his society, all the others would have been so indignant as to make his position much less agreeable.

Bright was his most intimate companion, spending many hours in the Prince's society. They conversed a great deal about Germany, and Bright was never tired of listening to descriptions of the beauties of the Rhine. He said that he expected to go to Europe soon, himself, and that he should be able to enjoy the tour so much more from having heard the Prince's charming descriptions.

The fifth day after the robbery of the safe, Mr. Rembrant, of the firm of Rembrant & Co., dealers in Yankee notions, discovered that one hundred and fifty dollars had been stolen from his trunk. As in all the other cases, there was absolutely no clue to the manner in which the money had been taken. It had disappeared, and that was all that could be said. In this instance, even the approximate time of the theft was unknown, since Mr. Rembrant had not looked at his money for several days.

These continual robberies were becoming wholly unbearable, and the committee again came down upon me in high wrath. They gave me a terrible overhauling for my apparent neglect and indifference.

"We want to know what you are doing," said Mr. Henry. "I can't see that you ever come to the house unless you are sent for, and then you go away, saying that nothing can be done. You told us at first that you had a special man who was going to work up this case,

but we havn't seen anything of him yet. Why don't you put him at work?"

"Yes," said Mr. Robinson, who was very bitter, indeed; "we have suffered enough already; why don't you acknowledge that the case is beyond your capacity and let us all leave the hotel? You have kept us in suspense for two weeks, and every time there is a new robbery you have the same story: 'Keep quiet, gentlemen; have patience.' It won't do, Mr. Pinkerton; we must have some evidence that this state of things will not continue all winter. If your man is at work, he must be deceiving you, or else he is very stupid. Neither I nor any other member of the committee has ever seen him, and he has never asked us for any information or help."

I kept my temper very carefully, though I am not usually a mild-spoken man when anyone attacks me, and told them that I felt as bad as if the losses had been my own.

I found that Mr. Beaver had been particularly savage in his remarks about me, and had thus conveyed some of his irritation to the committee. He had said that he believed I was a great braggart, promising much and doing little. He had been told by several city detectives that I was an interloper, a mere amateur, who knew nothing about the business.

With these feelings toward me, the committee were rather a difficult body to reason with; but I finally succeeded in pacifying them by the assurance that their property and money would be forthcoming in a few days. To tell the truth, the committee had a pretty hard time during those few days, since they were attacked with

almost as much bitterness as if they, themselves, had been responsible for all the losses. Under these circumstances, it was not unnatural that they should have wished to "pass along" a little of the scolding to me.

The next morning I received a letter from my man, Lynch, in New York. He had become acquainted with Mr. Bright's servants, and had taken the cook to the theatre. The cook had been with the family for a number of years, and was probably well-informed upon all their domestic affairs. He had invited her to attend a ball the next evening, when he hoped to be able to learn all she knew about Ed. Bright.

For several days all went quietly again at the Clifton House, and in the preparations for the approaching Christmas holidays the late robberies were forgotten. One afternoon Mrs. Winchester, the wife of a very wealthy iron merchant, returned from a shopping tour, which had occupied her nearly all day. Having spent all her money in buying presents, she had stopped at her husband's office just before returning to the hotel, and had obtained a fresh supply of cash for another campaign the next day. She entered her room, remaining long enough to remove her outdoor clothing, and then hurried into a neighbor's room to compare purchases. She left a well-filled pocket-book lying on the mantel-piece, and forgot to lock her door, as she expected to be gone only a few minutes. On returning, in less than half an hour, she gave one look at the mantel-piece, and then screamed. Her friends came rushing in, and found Mrs. Winchester in a state of collapse on the floor, and her pocket-book in a similar condition on the mantel. During her brief absence, over

three hundred dollars had been taken from the pocket-book, leaving it gaping, like a pair of shells whence the oyster had been extracted.

The Prince hurried over to report to me. He said that Mr. Winchester was almost wild enough to need a straight-jacket. He had sworn at everyone, from the landlord down to the bootblack, and had wound up by a peculiarly charitable and Christian imprecation against me and all other detectives, classing us either as knaves or fools — or both.

The Prince said that the boarders had held a meeting, and most of them had decided to leave the house. Bright had said that he should start soon for Memphis and New Orleans, going thence to Europe. He had asked the Prince for letters of introduction, which the latter had gladly promised to give him.

The number of letters promised by the Prince was so enormous that he would have kept a private secretary constantly employed in the work of writing them alone.

The late mail came in just after the Prince's departure, and in it I received a letter from Lynch. He had taken Mr. Bright's cook to the ball, where she, good-natured soul, possessed of plenty of wind and strength, had nearly danced him to death. Between dances, however, he had succeeded in drawing out a great deal of information about the young man in Chicago. Her account, condensed, was as follows :

Ed. Bright was his mother's favorite child, but as he grew to manhood, he became so wild and dissipated as to be uncontrollable. His father, at last, limited him to a certain liberal allowance, to which his fond mother added

every cent of her own pin-money that she could spare. The young man's extravagant habits soon used up all her money as well as his own, and finally, he forged his father's name to some notes, which Mr. Bright, senior, paid, rather than have his son punished for the crime. The young man drank heavily, and associated openly with abandoned women, so that it had been necessary to send him away, to save the rest of the family from being disgraced by him. Since he had been in Chicago, however, from all accounts he had wholly reformed, and his letters gave great joy to his parents. He frequently expressed deep regret at his past career, and a determination to wipe out his former record by a blameless life in the future. His letters had so pleased his parents that his father had decided to send him to Europe for a couple of years, and then take him into the firm as a partner.

Truly, 'tis a wise father that knoweth his own son.

I sat musing over Lynch's letter for some time, arranging my plans. I then sent for Mr. Bangs, and had a long consultation with him; our decision was to arrest Bright at the first opportunity. The time to act had arrived.

CHAPTER XV.

TWO days passed before an opportunity occurred to put my plan in operation to entrap Bright. The morning of the third day was ushered in with one of those terrible snow-storms which visit Chicago about once each winter, accompanied by intense cold. The temperature was nearly Arctic in its severity, and the cutting prairie wind rendered it dangerous to be exposed to its violence for any length of time. The snow was swept about in blinding sheets, lodging in every sheltered spot, and piling in huge drifts wherever the various air-currents created eddies. While in many places the streets and sidewalks were swept quite bare, in others, the snow settled in nearly impassable barriers. Business was almost wholly suspended, and very few persons could be seen about the streets.

Bright and the Prince, having nothing to call them away from the hotel, spent the day very comfortably and agreeably. Little cared they for the weather. They had all the requisites for amusement within doors, and they enjoyed themselves very satisfactorily. They occupied the forenoon in playing billiards, smoking, drinking egg-nog, and talking over the pleasures of their contemplated trip to New Orleans. After lunching together, they retired to the smoking-room for a quiet smoke and chat.

“Ah! my dear Bright,” said the Prince, as he drew a

sofa toward the grate, "your drink, which you call egg-nog, makes me much sleepy. Take an easy-chair, yourself make at home, and I the same will do. Will you smoke? Try this new brand which I opened to-day." And he handed his pocket-book to Bright.

Bright took it, and on opening it quickly, saw that there was a large sum of money inside. He closed it immediately and handed it back, saying, with a short, nervous laugh :

"You're pretty careless of your money, Prince. This is your pocket-book, not your cigar-case."

"Oh! pardon me," said the Prince; "they are so exactly alike that I do often that error make."

He then replaced his pocket-book in his coat, and handed the cigar-case to Bright. They each lit a cigar, and talked listlessly for a short time as they smoked. Finally, the Prince said :

"Your pardon I will ask in advance, *mein freund*, if I to sleep should go. Your egg-nog to my head has surely gone."

"Oh! that's all right," said Bright. "I will finish my cigar here, and then I have an engagement to play a match game of billiards, so that I shall be obliged to go out soon, anyhow."

"Well, I shall see you at dinner," replied the Prince, as he settled himself for a nap.

Very soon the quiet and warmth of the room began to have their effect upon the drowsy Prince; his breathing became regular and slow, and he passed into a sound sleep. Bright continued smoking in a rapid, excited manner, and then went to the door to look out into the hall. As he

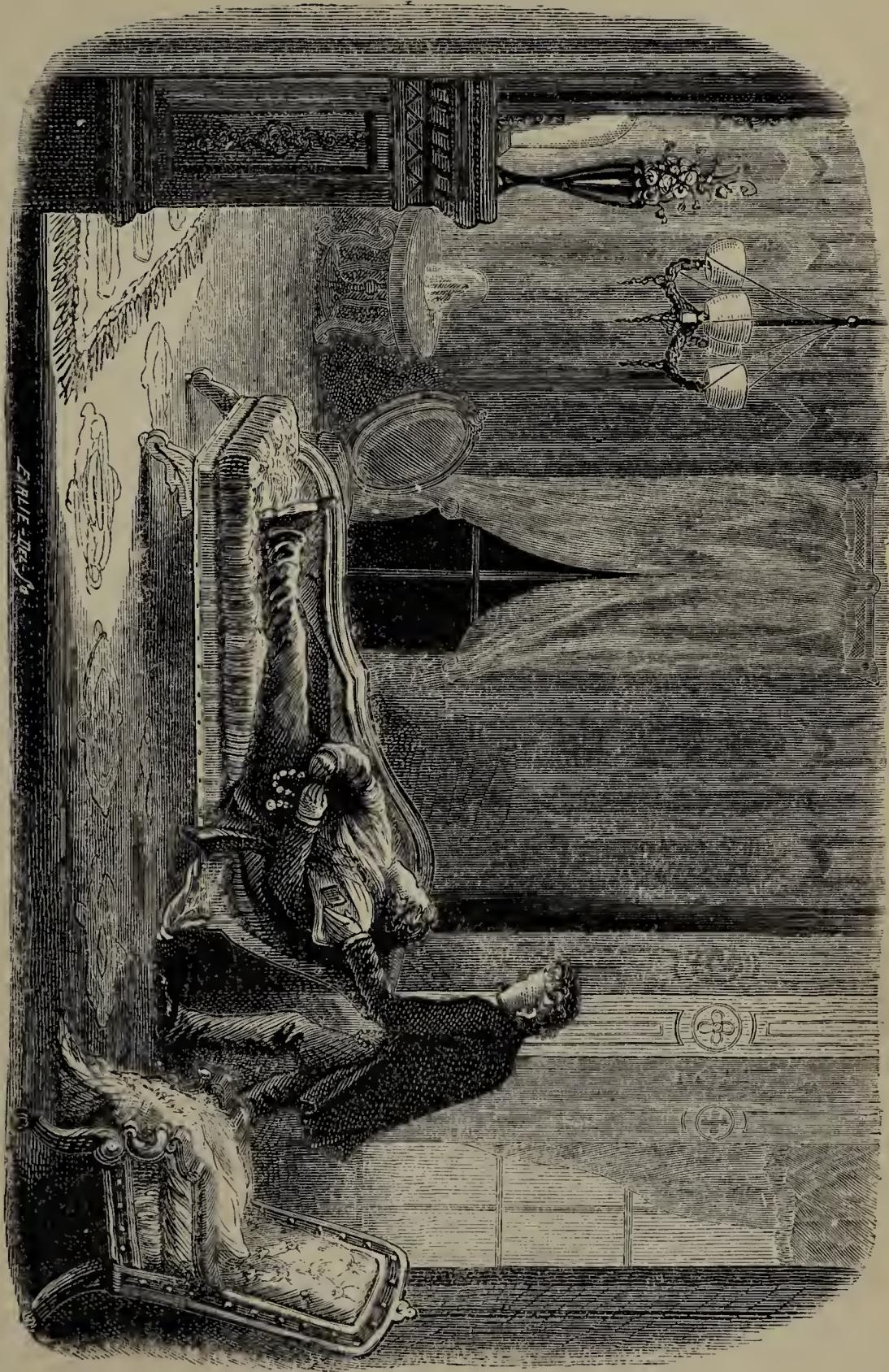
did so, the Prince moved restlessly in his sleep, and then turned over partly, on his side. His coat fell open as he moved, exposing the inside pocket, from which protruded his pocket-book. As Bright returned to his seat, his gaze was riveted on this pocket-book, which he knew contained a large sum of money.

The Prince's sleep was now evidently very sound, and his position, comfortable. There was no probability that he would awake for some time. Bright again stepped to the door, looked down the hall and glanced into the reading-room and parlors, but saw no one near. He then cautiously approached the Prince, but sprang back, with a terrified look, as he heard a distant door slam heavily. Having satisfied himself a second time that he was not watched, he darted quickly to the Prince's side, seized the pocket-book between his finger and thumb, and dexterously pulled it from the pocket. He paused a moment to see whether the Prince had been disturbed, and then left the room. In a few minutes he returned, and finding the Prince still asleep, he carefully replaced the pocket-book in the loose, open pocket, whence he had taken it. He then passed from the room. The deed was done, the bait had been taken, and it now remained only to close the trap.

The reader will now see where I made my point.

The Prince remained in his comfortable position until he was sure that Bright had gone away, and then arose, with an expression the very reverse of sleepy. He immediately put on his fur cap and overcoat, and hurried to my office. Those who saw him go out thought it was a freak, such as often takes a traveler, to see how severe the

Having satisfied himself a second time that he was not watched, he darted quickly to the Prince's side, seized the pocket-book between his forefinger and thumb, and dexterously pulled it from the pocket.—Page 100.



weather actually was; and as he struggled against the wind, or plunged through snow-drifts, he was probably undergoing an experience which he would be able to relate on his return to Bavaria, as an instance of the climate of the United States.

I had not been out during the day, so that I received the Prince's report immediately on his arrival. He related all the circumstances of the theft, and handed me the pocket-book. On examining it, I discovered that three marked bills of fifty dollars each, and two of one hundred dollars each, were missing, leaving about two hundred dollars still in the pocket-book.

"Now," I said, "Bright's career is ended. The game is up."

I called Mr. Bangs into my office and gave him directions as to what I wished done. I then told the Prince to return to the Clifton House.

"I shall place men around the hotel to watch," I said, "and shall be there myself within an hour. You must keep a lookout for me, and when I pass under the gas-lamp, you must come to meet me. It is such a stormy night that we shall run little risk of being seen. If Bright is not in, I shall wait until he comes. I wish to arrest him quietly, and hence should prefer to see him alone. If that is impossible, however, I will arrest him publicly, before all his friends."

It was now after four o'clock, and owing to the darkness of the storm, the gas-lamps were already lighted. The Prince started off, and I concluded my arrangements with Bangs. The latter, with three detectives, was to watch the house, so as to arrest Bright, if he should receive any

warning and endeavor to escape. I intended to make the arrest myself, however, if I could. Bangs soon departed with his men, and I followed him in a short time.

It was, indeed, a terrible night. The wind blew with frantic violence, eddying about among the buildings in such a way as to seem always blowing in my face. The frozen snow-flakes cut like a knife, and almost blinded me as I struggled along through the drifts.

"That night a chiel might understand
The deil had business on his hand."

At length I reached the corner opposite the Clifton House. I had not stood long under the lamp-post ere I saw the Prince coming to meet me.

"It's all right," he said. "Bright is alone in the parlor, playing and singing. The ladies have all gone to dress for dinner, and now is the best time to see him."

I wore a slouch hat and a large muffler which wholly concealed my features. One hand was protected by a warm glove, while the other was bare, as I might have to use force. I noiselessly slipped into the hall by the main entrance. No one was in sight, and I quickly entered the parlor. There, at the piano, with his back turned toward me, was Bright, the object of my visit.

The gas was turned down low, but, in the dim light, he was running his fingers over the piano keys, giving vent to his happiness in song. He was, undoubtedly enjoying very pleasant thoughts. He was picturing to himself the prospective delights of his southern tour.

In a few days, with Mamie Liston on his arm, he would leave this frigid climate of Chicago and revel in the balmy

atmosphere of the South. They would sit in the open air beneath magnolias and orange trees, while the soft breezes would come to them over fragrant fields and groves, sweet-scented with perfume, and laden with the songs of birds. Then, when they should have become satiated with these scenes, they would embark for Europe, where Bright would make the acquaintance of Prince Beauharnais and many others of the nobility. What a splendid opportunity he would then have to replenish his purse at the expense of the titled aristocracy of the Old World! Only a few hours previous, he had proved how easy it was to rob a careless prince, who scarcely knew how much money he had. Oh! how he would thrive when he got into a community of such fellows!

He little imagined that Nemesis was already at his elbow. As I crossed the room, the velvet carpet gave back no sound of my foot-fall, and in a second I was at his side. Laying my hand on his shoulder, I said, in a low, stern voice:

“You are my prisoner.”

He sprang from his seat with a gasp of terror, but my hand was on his shoulder with a grasp of iron. Abject fear was depicted in every line of his face, and he could not speak.

“Come with me,” I said.

“I don’t know you,” he replied, convulsively. “For God’s sake, who are you, and what do you want?”

“I want that money you stole to-day,” was my answer.

“I never stole any money,” he said, in a low, trembling tone.

“Let me have that money,” I repeated, in a determined

voice. "Will you give it up, or shall I take it from you? I must have it. Do you wish to be disgraced before all the boarders? Give me the money immediately."

He made no move to get it, so I put my hand into his pocket and took out his pocket-book, which was full of bills. I opened it, and there, like the blood on Macbeth's dagger, I saw the fatal mark on the bank-notes.

"Where did you get this money, and how long have you had it?" I asked.

"My father sent it to me, and I have had it more than three weeks," he replied.

"Pshaw, man, I know better," said I. "This money has not been in your possession for three hours. You stole it this afternoon from the Prince's pocket-book."

The bold manner in which I made this charge completely unnerved him. It was not alone the sense of guilt which overpowered him, but, also, the astounding fact that I, a perfect stranger to him, should know what even the Prince, himself, did not seem to have discovered.

"My God!" he exclaimed, completely thrown off his guard, "how did you know that?"

"Never mind *how* I know it—it is enough that I do. Now, don't stand talking here, or the whole house will know that Bright is a thief. Come with me, and I may save your reputation, yet," said I, putting his pocket-book into my pocket.

I heard the rustle of dresses coming down the stairs, and I grasped his hand.

"Quick!" said I; "come this way."

He hurried with me to the door leading into the back hall, and just as I passed out of the parlor, the porter,

carrying a hod of coal, entered the room by the door at the other end. Following him, came a number of ladies, so that our escape was made just in time.

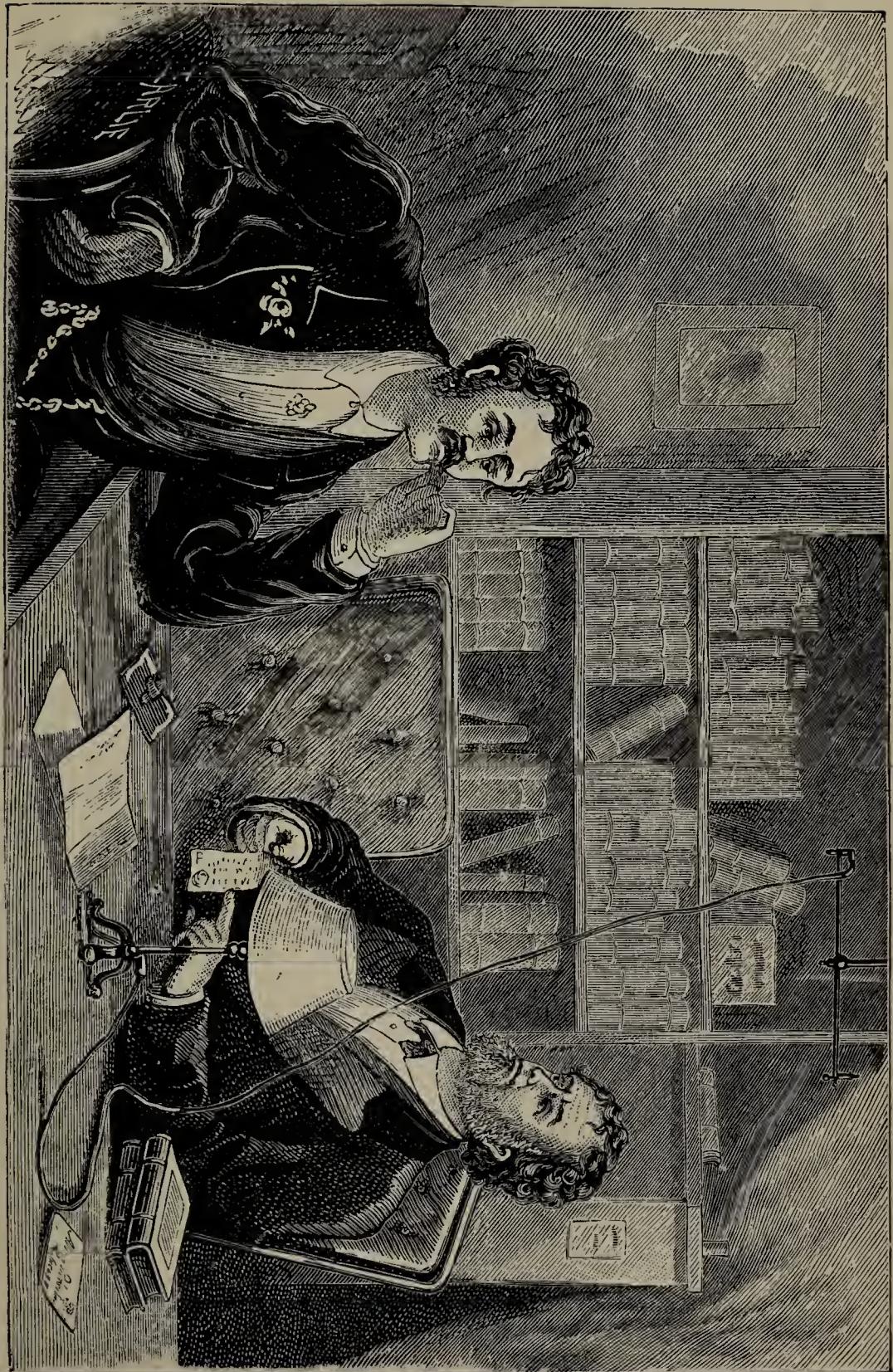
As I conducted Bright toward the front door, I asked him where he had left his coat and hat. He pointed them out to me on the coat-rack, and I quickly grabbed them as I passed. On reaching the vestibule, I stopped long enough to enable him to put his overcoat on, and we then passed out into the storm, without having been seen by a single person. I locked arms securely with him, and led him, through the storm and darkness, to my office, Bangs and his men keeping within a few paces all the way.

CHAPTER XVI.

NOT a word was spoken as we pressed on through the storm, and we entered my office rather breathless from our exertions in climbing through the snow-drifts. I took off my coat and hung it up. Bright mechanically followed my example, and then asked for a glass of water. He gulped down the water, threw himself into a chair and buried his face in his hands. I left him to himself for a time, in order to let him realize the gravity of his offences. I was the first to speak, as I wished to pour upon him the whole misery of his situation at once.

“ Bright, do you begin to appreciate the terrible position in which you have placed yourself?” I asked. “ How many robberies of money, jewelry, etc., have you committed? You are but a young man in years, yet you are already old in crime. Your parents are wealthy, and you could honestly command any luxury you wished, yet you have resorted to stealing to supply yourself with money. What excuse can you offer? Why have you done so? The man who steals to keep body and soul together—to save himself from starvation—is to be pitied, rather than condemned; but for you, there is no excuse. In order to gratify your merely animal desires, you have robbed your friends—not once, only, but forty or fifty times. Think, for a moment, of your mother’s unspeakable agony when she hears of this.”

"Bright, is this money yours or mine?" I asked.—Page 107



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Bright had recovered his composure by this time, and he now spoke up, in a dogged manner:

“You’re a stranger to me. I don’t know you, nor you me. How dare you accuse me of stealing? You are the thief. You have taken my money from me and have put it in your pocket. Tell me what all this means.”

“You say this money is yours, do you? Well, let us see,” I replied, taking the pocket-book from my pocket. “I do not rely on my own evidence alone, to convict you, but I have, also, that of the well-known banker, Mr. R. K. Swift, who will prove that he gave me these bills only yesterday. I have not had any opportunity to mark them since I took them from you, but, on the bills which belong to me, will be found the letter P, plainly marked in red ink on the upper left-hand corner.”

As I spoke I took out the bills, unrolled them, and showed him the mark on five of them.

“Bright, is this money yours or mine?” I asked.

“Yours—I am guilty,” he answered, his voice breaking into a sob, as he spoke. “Oh! for God’s sake, have mercy on me!”

“Yes, Bright, I thought it would come to this,” I said. “Think, for a moment, upon your position. For every one of your crimes the penalty is a long term of imprisonment at hard labor in the penitentiary. How many robberies have you committed?”

“I don’t know how many. I have been stealing for a long time. I don’t know what to do or say. I am crazy! What will my poor mother say when she hears of this? Oh! God! this is horrible!”

“Did you steal Mr. Robinson’s money?” I asked.

"Yes."

"Mrs. Judson's watch and money?"

"Yes."

"Mrs. Blackall's money, and Mrs. Hutchinson's?"

"Yes."

"Mrs. Beaver's money and jewelry?"

"Yes."

In this way I went through the whole list of robberies as far as I could remember them, and he acknowledged having committed them all.

"Now, you see where you have placed yourself," I said. "I will give you until to-morrow morning to rest and calm yourself; you must then make out a list of the parties you have robbed, and the amounts taken from each. What shall I do with you? Do you think your father would pay back all these losses to the people whom you have robbed?"

"Oh! yes; and if he would not, mother would. I have been deceiving them terribly ever since I have been here, by reports of how well I was getting along, while, in fact, I have been growing worse and worse. Father can and will pay back every cent I have taken, if I will only swear to reform. Oh! why was I not detected in the first robbery I ever attempted? Then I should have been spared this; but I succeeded so well that I went on, and every new success encouraged me to continue, and now my whole life will be blasted by a long term in the penitentiary. Won't you please telegraph to my father and see what he will do?"

After thinking over the matter, I said:

"I will telegraph to my New York agent, Robert Boyer,

and you can telegraph to your father. Say that you are in trouble, and that a gentleman, named Robert Boyer, will call upon him and explain all."

Bright immediately seized a pen and wrote a dispatch to his father, while I wrote one as follows:

"ROBERT BOYER, White street, New York:

"I have arrested Ed. Bright for larcenies committed at various times in the Clifton House. He has been operating for nine or ten months. He admits all. The pool amounts to nearly nine thousand dollars. See Bright, senior, and find out what he intends to do. Tell Lynch to drop his calls on the cook and send his bill to me.

"ALLAN PINKERTON."

I read the dispatch to Bright and he expressed himself satisfied with it. I then showed him to a spare bed-room, which I kept in connection with my suite of offices, and left him to pass the night. Two of my men alternated in watching him, and I felt convinced that there would be no more startling robberies at the Clifton House for some time at least.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE Prince passed the evening at the hotel, as it was altogether too stormy to go out. He had, as usual, a most agreeable time. Knowing that his princely career was now rapidly drawing to a close, he made the most of his opportunities, and played, sang, and flirted most enchantingly. Bright's absence was not considered strange, as it was supposed that he had gone to visit some friend and had been weatherbound by the storm. Of course there was no longer any actual necessity of retaining the Prince at the hotel, but I thought best to keep him there at least a week longer, so that the part he had played should not be suspected.

The next morning I had a long talk with Bright. I asked him what he had done with the jewelry he had stolen. He said that he had disposed of it at various pawnbroker's shops. On pressing him to tell me what shops had bought the articles, he was unable to answer.

"Young man," I said, "don't you know that it is impossible to take a middle course with me? If you wish to be saved from exposure and the rigors of the law, you must make up your mind to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. What have you done with the stolen jewelry?"

He finally admitted that he had given it all to a girl named Mamie Liston, whom he had been keeping at



Madam Hatch's. I did not consider it necessary to let him know that I was fully aware of this fact in advance, but made him confess the whole story himself. My object was to prevent him from suspecting either the Prince or Madam Hatch.

"Now," said I, when he had told me about Mamie Liston, "sit down and write an order for this girl to deliver all the jewelry to me."

"No," he replied, "I don't wish to take the things from Mamie; my father will pay the full value of everything."

"That won't do," said I. "It would be wrong to rob your father to benefit your mistress. Besides, among the articles you have stolen are many heir-looms and keepsakes which the owners value far above any amount of money. I must have the identical articles themselves. If you will not give me the order, I shall arrest Mamie as a receiver of stolen goods. She will be sent to prison, and I shall get the jewelry by force."

Bright did not wish her to be molested, and therefore wrote the order at my dictation. I immediately went to Madam Hatch's and had an interview with Mamie. At first she was inclined to disregard Bright's order, but I soon succeeded in convincing her that she would not be able to offer any resistance, so she collected all the jewelry in a good-sized pile, tied it up in a handkerchief, and burst into tears as she saw me about to depart with it. I told her that I wished no one to know of Bright's trouble, and she had the two alternatives of keeping quiet, thus saving them both from a criminal trial, or of making it public and being prosecuted as a receiver of stolen goods, knowing them to have been stolen. She

promised to keep the matter secret, and I returned to my office with the jewelry.

During the day I received a telegram from Robert Boyer. He said that he had called on Mr. Bright, whom he had found completely broken down by the shock which his son's dispatch had given him. Mr. Bright begged that the matter might be kept secret, since if Mrs. Bright should hear that Ed. had become a thief, it would break her heart. He would send Mr. Young, his confidential secretary, to Chicago to settle up all the losses. The latter would have authority to draw upon Mr. Bright for the amount of money necessary to reimburse the persons who had been robbed. Mr. Young would leave that night for Chicago, and would call upon me as soon as he arrived.

Until Mr. Young's arrival, however, I was obliged to keep Bright a close prisoner at my office, and as the snow-storm somewhat interfered with the railroads, Mr. Young did not reach Chicago until the third day after the arrest. On coming to my office, Mr. Young introduced himself to me and showed his authority from Mr. Bright to act in the matter. He requested to see Ed. Bright, and I at once showed him up to the latter's room. As soon as Mr. Young entered, Bright burst into tears, and I left them alone for some time, not caring to be a witness of the painful scene.

I had never known the exact amount of money and property stolen by Bright, so I sent for Mr. Robinson and asked him to furnish me with a complete list of the losses in the Clifton House, and I would see what could be done toward settling with the losers.

Mr. Robinson was struck dumb with surprise, but soon found his voice, and, in great excitement, wished to know whether I had caught the thief.

"That is not likely," I replied, "but I wish to find out how much it will take to settle the matter if I do find him or her. Therefore, get me the list, and I will see what I can do. Put in everything—shirts, underwear, jewelry, money—every article, in fact, that was stolen."

"But you don't expect to recover the jewelry?" he asked.

"No, I don't *expect* any thing, but get me the list, and I will see what can be done," I replied.

Mr. Robinson returned to the Clifton House and soon set the boarders at work making out a list of their losses. I had to smile when I saw Mr. Beaver's list, as he had placed the most enormous prices on every article of jewelry he had lost. I said nothing, however, as I had the very jewelry which was stolen, ready to return to him.

When Mr. Robinson brought his list, I deducted from it the jewelry I had on hand, and added a fair amount for my time and expenses in working up the case. Mr. Young at once drew upon Mr. Bright, senior, for the amount, and as he and Ed. wended their way to the depot, *en route* for New York, I took the draft to Mr. Swift's bank and had it placed to my credit.

Ed. Bright sailed for England a few days later, since which time I have heard nothing of him.

I was influenced in my course in allowing him to escape prosecution, by the fact that it was his first serious crime, and I was convinced that it would be his last. If I had given him up to the authorities, he would have had to

serve at least twenty years in the penitentiary, which punishment, though deserved, I did not have the heart to see meted out to him. I knew I had no right to compound a felony, but I felt that I could better serve the interests of society by giving this young man a chance to reform, than by delivering him up to a long term in prison, whence he would come out a hardened villain — his hand turned against every man, and every man's hand against him. Mr. Bright, senior, has called upon me several times since, and he always has expressed the warmest gratitude for the great good I did his family.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON my return to my office from the bank, I sent for Mr. Robinson, handed him his money and jewelry, and had him sign a receipt which I had prepared. He was all amazement, and I believe he would willingly have given back his recovered money to have had his curiosity satisfied as to who was the thief. But, on this point, I was impervious to all inquiries, and no amount of sharp questions could draw from me the least drop of information. I told him to return to the hotel and send the persons who had been robbed to me, and I would pay them in full for all their losses.

Merry Christmas had just passed, but, I must say, I never have felt more like a genuine Santa Claus than I did then. I was seated behind my desk with a pile of money on one side, little heaps of jewelry, sorted out and labeled, on the other, and before me a long list of names and amounts. During the afternoon, my office was crowded with visitors, and I was kept busy in dealing out the treasure before me and taking receipts.

Every few minutes there would be a perfect chorus, the ladies' voices predominating :

“But, Mr. Pinkerton, who is the thief?”

I answered them from Tennyson :

“Theirs not to reason why—
Theirs not to make reply”—

All they had to do was to take their money and sign the receipt.

My visitors, in fact, were little more than a crowd of animated interrogation marks, and the number of questions showered upon me would have tried the patience of even Job himself.

Nearly all of them wished to reward me for my trouble, but I refused to take anything whatever. Mr. Beaver called, amongst the rest, and when I handed him his own jewelry, he seemed to feel decidedly cheap, after having placed such an enormous valuation on it. He lost all his volubility, and slunk out of the office without a word. I was not sorry when the last visitor had received his property and departed.

I have now only to relate the occurrences at the Clifton House, from the time of Bright's arrest until the close of the engagement of my ex-janitor in his great *role* of Claude Melnotte.

All went along smoothly with the Prince. There was not a beauty in the house who did not worship at his shrine, and I am not exaggerating when I say that he could have married any young lady in that set, had he so desired.

Even he was, for a time, lost sight of in the excitement caused by the mysterious disappearance of Bright. The day following the arrest, many inquiries were made as to what had become of him. Nothing wrong was suspected, however, as it was thought that he might be visiting some of his friends, but when another day passed and still no Bright appeared, the boarders began to work themselves up to a great pitch of excitement.

Some of the ladies had heard him singing in the parlor, about five o'clock in the afternoon of the day on which he was missed, but on going into the room soon after, they had seen only a shadow flitting out of the doorway. The porter had entered the room at the same time and he was sure he had seen a strange and uncouth figure vanishing through the door. No one, however, had seen Bright. The servants, on the strength of the porter's story, went a step farther and declared, with superstitious earnestness, that he had been spirited away by some supernatural power—possibly the devil.

Some one stated that Bright had been seen plowing his way through the drifts toward Rush street bridge, late at night; it was, therefore, probable that, confused by the blinding storm, he had walked into the river and drowned. *I never was able to learn who started this story*, but it was accepted with great readiness as a solution of his mysterious disappearance. Bright had been a great favorite among the boarders, so that his sudden loss cast a gloom over the house. His friends inserted advertisements in the papers asking for information of him, and, also, offering to pay liberally for the return of his body, if found, to the Clifton House. Their efforts proved unavailing, however, and they never succeeded in learning the fate of the unfortunate young man. To this day, some of the old boarders in the Clifton House speak of young Bright with tears in their eyes. No one ever suspected him of having been the thief.

A week after Bright's disappearance, the Prince announced his intention of leaving for the South. He had received, through his bankers, Swift & Co., a letter

from his father, directing him to visit the Southern States, as it was desirable that he should become acquainted with all parts of the Union. After spending a few months in the South, he was to take a tour through the Atlantic States, and then return to Bavaria.

This announcement gave many a young lady the heart-ache, as she thought of the prize about to slip from her grasp. The fair Cliftonians were consoled, however, by receiving letters of introduction to the Prince's father, and by the Prince's promise to meet them in Munich, when they should visit Bavaria. They all felt that "while there's life, there's hope," and each one expected to achieve success on the next trial.

The day set for the Prince's departure arrived only too soon. He devoted the morning to bidding tender farewells to the Hansons, the Beavers, the Pearsons, and all the rest. Time flew as it never had flown before. The Prince had said but half what he wished to express, when his carriage was announced at the door.

He was dressed even more superbly than usual, and seemed determined to leave a most favorable impression behind him. His big trunk, of undoubted European manufacture, was deposited behind the carriage, the Prince, wrapped in his magnificent cloak, took his seat, and the door was closed upon him. Hands and handkerchiefs were enthusiastically waved in adieu as the gallant Bavarian drove off, and in a few minutes he disappeared forever from the guests of the Clifton House.

Departing by the Illinois Central Railroad, the Prince went to Kankakee, about sixty miles south of Chicago where he found it convenient to stop. He went to a

hotel, doffed his princely character and attire, and dressed himself in a modest suit of grey. He then packed his finery in his trunk and sent it to me by express, while he went on to Onarga, to rusticate on my farm.

At the end of a week, he returned to Chicago, and the poor, benighted residents of that city never knew that they had possessed a prince of their own.

SEQUEL.

THE preceding pages of Claude Melnotte contain nothing but absolute facts; the incidents related in the chapters which follow, however, may be taken with a grain of allowance. The author does not say they did *not* occur as stated, but he cannot vouch for them from his own personal knowledge, as he can for all other portions of this volume; hence this sequel may be regarded as a recital of possibilities, rather than as a history of actual facts.

CHAPTER I.

L' ENVOI.

IN the month of April, 1855, the families, whose daughters had received the most attention from the Prince, began their preparations for a foreign tour. Each family was desirous that the others should not know anything of its own intentions; hence, the Hansons, the Beavers, the Humes, and the Pearsons were all quietly working in the same direction, in total ignorance that others were similarly engaged. Towards the middle of May, the guests of the Clifton began to separate for their annual *villeggiatura*, some going to Mackinac, some to Saratoga, and many others to watering-places on the sea-coast. Among these last were the four families above-named, who took leave of each other with many outward expressions of regard, and much inward jealousy and dislike.

“Good-bye, my dear,” said Mrs. Beaver to Mrs. Hanson. “I suppose we shall meet at Newport or Cape May. I shall miss you so much, and your sweet little girl, also. Bye-bye.”

The “sweet little girl” looked daggers at the speaker, as she felt herself quite a grown young lady, especially since the Prince had paid her so much attention. Mrs. Hanson replied, however:

“Oh! yes, I certainly hope we shall meet this summer; but at any rate, of course we shall all return to the Clifton next fall. We shall have so much to talk about, then.”

"Yes, indeed; I have no doubt we shall quite surprise each other with our adventures," said Mrs. Beaver, as she went out.

Each lady was so engrossed in her own plans that she never suspected that the other was contemplating the same kind of a surprise on her part.

"I hate that Mrs. Beaver," said the impulsive Miss Hanson, as the door closed. "She is always trying to make me appear a little girl. She used to do the same when the Prince was here."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Hanson; "I don't like her ways at all. She is a very scheming woman, and was terribly mortified that you received more attention from the Prince than her daughters did. Never mind; wait until we return from Munich next fall—*if we do return then*," she added, significantly.

Miss Hanson's blushes showed that she fully understood the possibility implied in her mother's last remark, and she, therefore, hastened to change the subject.

Miss Pearson and Miss Hume were nearly of the same age, and, previous to the Prince's coming, they had been quite intimate. They still maintained an outward friendship, and Miss Hume spent the evening before her departure in Miss Pearson's room.

"So, you are going to Rye Beach, are you?" said Miss Pearson. "Well, we shall leave here for New York next week. There will be time enough to arrange our plans after we reach there. I should so like to go to Europe."

"Oh! my! would you?" exclaimed the horror-stricken Miss Hume. "It must be dreadful to cross the ocean. I know I should die of sea-sickness. Besides, it's terribly dangerous."

Miss Hume never suspected that Miss Pearson really intended going, but desired to frighten her out of any possible desire she might have, to go. Miss Hume was one of those women who never do anything directly, if they can possibly accomplish it by indirect means. Her parents were rather mismatched (though to the world they were apparently harmonious), and she had been continually forced to dissimulate ever since she could recollect. Miss Pearson, on the contrary, was disposed to be perfectly frank, and her principles would not permit her even to acquiesce in a deception. She replied, therefore :

“ Well, I should certainly expect to be sea-sick, and if there were a storm, I should be very much frightened ; nevertheless, I should like to go.”

Her frankness disarmed Miss Hume’s slight suspicions, so that the subject was soon dropped ; but Miss Hume congratulated herself that one rival was safely disposed of for the summer.

By an odd coincidence, the Beaver and Hume families engaged passage by the same steamer, in the last week of May, and on the day of sailing the two parties met, face to face, on the dock. Yet, even then, they were each so anxious to deceive the other, that neither suspected what was the other’s object in being there, and in the mutual desire to conceal their real intentions, the following ludicrous scene occurred, as they walked on board the steamer :

Mr. Beaver — “ Why, Hume, where did you come from ? Mrs. Hume and Miss Lydia, too ; really, quite an unexpected pleasure. Going to take the steamer for Cape May, I presume ? ”

Mrs. Hume (aside to her daughter) — “How *did* those pretentious Beavers ever come to be here?” (Aloud) “Oh! I am so glad to meet you, Mr. Beaver. Mrs. B., you are looking even better than you did when you left Chicago. Your girls, too; why you have quite a family party.”

Mrs. Beaver — “Yes, indeed; it seems so odd to meet Clifton House people so far away. Have you been in New York long?”

Miss Hume (leading the way over the gang-plank) — “Oh! no; we arrived about a week ago, having stopped in Rochester for a time.”

During this conversation, the ladies had been “taking stock” of each other’s dresses, and the Beaver girls had been wondering among themselves how they could have had the ill-luck to meet “that Hume girl;” she would be sure to tell everyone that they had gone to Europe to meet Prince Beauharnais. Mr. Hume and Mr. Beaver had been talking vaguely about the weather, when suddenly, Mr. Beaver saw Miss Hume advancing toward the Cunard steamer, and he spoke up in a very jocular manner:

“That isn’t your steamer, Miss Lydia. You would have found it no joke, if you had been carried off to Liverpool in a Cunarder, especially if your baggage had gone to Cape May. Ha! ha! ha! You would have had a nice time!”

Miss Hume was very quick-witted, and she determined to go on board the steamer immediately, without troubling her head about the Beavers’ destination, so she stopped and replied:

"We are real sorry to leave you so soon, but we are not going to Cape May. You see, some of our friends are going abroad by this steamer, and we came down ——"

"Oh! just so," interrupted the cunning Beaver, who had been racking his brains to account for his presence there, and who saw a plausible reason in Miss Hume's remarks. "We are here, then, on the same errand. Our friends, the Carters of Cincinnati, are going abroad by this steamer, and we have come down to see them off." Saying which, he joined Miss Hume, and the two parties moved on board. Here they separated, since each family was very anxious to escape from the other, and to avoid observation until after the steamer had sailed.

"I would ask you to call on us," said Mrs. Beaver, "but we shall leave town to-day."

"What a pity!" replied Miss Hume, with a dry, little cough; "so do we."

"Well, good-bye, all," came in a chorus from both parties, as they moved away from each other.

"There, Mrs. Beaver," said that lady's triumphant husband, "didn't I get us out of that scrape nicely? If those Humes knew we were going to Europe, it would be just like them to follow us by the next steamer."

"Yes, Alf," replied his wife, "I must say I couldn't have done better myself."

At the same time, Mr. Hume was saying:

"Well, Mrs. Hume, your daughter's talent for equivocation was turned to some use in that instance. Beaver is rich enough to tag right along after us, if he supposed we were going to visit the Prince. Lydia, I congratulate you upon your presence of mind. You ought to have been a politician, my dear."

Lydia Hume was used to such compliments from her father, and never noticed them in any way.

In a short time, the steamer got under way and left the harbor. A heavy, chopping sea was met just outside the Narrows, and nearly every passenger yielded to the motion of the vessel in a few minutes. The first week of the voyage the sea was somewhat rough, hence, none of the members of the Beaver or Hume parties were able to leave their state-rooms. The latter half of the trip was violently stormy, and very few of the passengers appeared at meals or on deck, until smooth water was reached, and the ship was gliding rapidly up the Mersey. The Beavers were then among the first to be ready to disembark, and accordingly ascended to the upper-deck, where, with their friends, the Carters, they took seats directly in front of one of the stair-cases leading to the main *salon*. They were chatting gaily, in agreeable anticipation of the pleasures of foreign travel, and were contrasting the harbor of Liverpool with that of New York, when the connection of thoughts led Mr. Beaver to say, laughingly:

“I wonder when we shall meet the Humes again.”

An exclamation behind them caused the whole party to turn to look, and there, just pausing at the top of the staircase, stood all three members of the Hume family! Miss Hume was the first to recover herself; her stony glare of amazement changing to one of amusement as she took in the horrified looks and intense embarrassment of the Beavers. Stepping forward, gracefully, she said:

“Why, how very unfortunate you must have been, Mrs. Beaver, to have been carried away *accidentally*, on the steamer—especially if your baggage has gone to Saratoga,”

she added, with a mocking glance at Mr. Beaver. "Now we," she continued, "were so fortunate as to get ours on board just in time. Our friends, the Stantons, were unable to go, and we decided to take their berths instead of going to Cape May."

This was a literal fact; the Stantons, having secured berths several weeks in advance, had sold their tickets to the Humes about a week before the steamer sailed.

The female wing of the Beaver party were quite crushed at this audacious statement, especially as the Carters were looking at them with open astonishment; knowing that the trip had been planned by the Beavers a long time in advance, the Carters could not understand Miss Hume's remarks, nor the too evident confusion of the Beavers. Mr. Beaver finally plunged into an explanation, with about as much presence of mind as a bull in a china shop.

"Well—ahem; the fact is,—that is, you know—at least, I mean that we were only joking that day. You see we didn't want every one to know where we were going, —" here he caught a savage look from his wife, and hastened to correct matters. "Of course, I don't mean there was any objection, you know, but for certain private reasons—," another glance from his wife sent his wits wool-gathering, and he stumbled along: "We accepted an invitation—that is, I mean—we expect one—our plan was arranged, you know, last winter—," here he broke down, utterly annihilated by the looks of horror of his own family and those of amusement in the faces of the Humes and Carters.

"Oh! I quite understand you, Mr. Beaver," said the

sarcastic Miss Hume; "depend upon it, your secret is safe with us. Well, good morning, I suppose we shall see you in London, or Paris, or, *possibly*, Munich; so, *au revoir*, my dear Mrs. Beaver."

The Humes then moved off triumphantly, and left the Beavers biting their lips in wrath and shame. The steamer was nearly at the docks, so that all the passengers were preparing to leave. The Carters, therefore, retired from the upper deck, leaving the Beavers overcome with mortification at their ridiculous position.

The blame for the whole affair was thrown upon Mr. Beaver, first, for inventing such a stupid story in New York, and then, for making the matter worse by his idiotic attempt at explanation to Miss Hume. This unfortunate incident considerably damped the spirits of the Beaver party, but they consoled themselves by anticipations of the delightful trip through Switzerland, which they had arranged to make in company with the Prince. Filled with these agreeable hopes, they determined to hurry on to Munich in advance of Miss Hume, whom they now recognized as an open and formidable enemy. Unfortunately, by some mistake, all their baggage was carried through Paris, and sent on to Marseilles, where it remained for about ten days before its whereabouts could be discovered. They were thus delayed about two weeks, as of course they could not go to see the Prince without a full supply of handsome dresses.

Meanwhile, the Humes also remained in Paris, having sensibly preferred to obtain all their stylish outfit in that city, instead of having it made in the United States.

They then went to Brussels to purchase some fine lace, and proceeded thence to Munich.

The Hanson family followed the Beavers the very next week, but took passage in the Bremen line of steamers and traveled leisurely through Germany to Munich.

Mrs. Pearson and her daughter were the last to start, being obliged to wait for some friends whose escort was desirable, and they arrived in Paris just after the Beavers and Humes had taken their departure. Mrs. Pearson immediately went to a popular American banking-house, to draw some money, and there learned that there were already two more Richmonds in the field, or, in other words, that Miss Hume and the Misses Beaver had arrived in Paris recently, but had just started for Bavaria. The Pearsons, therefore, determined to send their letters of introduction to Prince Beauharnais by mail, and to await a reply in Paris. In order to send their letters in proper style, Mrs. Pearson requested the American Minister to forward them through the Bavarian diplomatic representative in Paris. The letters were, therefore, sent to the Bavarian legation, with a polite note from our Minister requesting the Bavarian Envoy to forward them to Prince Beauharnais. Of course, the existence of such an individual was promptly denied, and, in a short time, the Pearsons received perfectly satisfactory evidence that their *soi-disant* prince must have been a very plausible and agreeable—but, nevertheless, lying—impostor. Both mother and daughter were highly indignant and mortified, but they had been very guarded in their talk about the Prince at home, and had not mentioned him at all abroad, so that they did not fear that any gossip would

connect them with the bogus Prince. They were all curiosity, however, to know what sort of a time the Humes and Beavers had had in their personal search for him, and they also congratulated themselves that they had escaped that humiliation at least.

The fates decreed that the three Clifton House parties should arrive in Munich on the same day—the Hansons from Dresden, the Humes from Brussels, and the Beavers from Paris. Each party was provided with a courier, and, as soon as they were established in their rooms, the couriers were duly instructed to learn the whereabouts of Prince Beauharnais' palace, in order that they might call upon him next day. The wondering couriers were greatly puzzled at the name of this wealthy prince, of whom they had never heard before, and, accordingly, ventured to ask a few questions. The tourists were all so anxious to show what distinguished people they were, that the story of the young Prince and his various invitations was told with great pride to all the couriers.

These couriers are always men of great information, and are very shrewd judges of character. In this case, each one felt confident that his employers had been imposed upon, but he did not dare to tell them so in their present state of mind. After a late dinner, however, the three couriers met in a neat cafe, which was the usual resort of these men. As they were members of the same *Bureau des Couriers*, they were all well acquainted, and they sat down with their beer and pipes to compare notes. After the usual salutations had passed, they began talking about their respective employers and their proposed routes of travel.

"Oh! but I have the queer lot," said Jacques. "They are here, they say, to visit a Prince, and may I never see Savoy again if I don't think they are just about crazy. They have given me a minute description of his park and his palace, and they have an invitation to spend three months with him; so my duties are apt to be light for a while—provided," he added, scratching his ear, dubiously, "I can succeed in one thing."

"*Parbleu! mon ami*, but thou art more lucky than I," answered Edouard. "I, also, have some of these devils of Americans, and I have been in purgatory since I left Paris. They, too, are acquainted with a prince, who has invited them to accompany him on a tour down the Rhine and through Germany. If I had only *one* thing necessary to enable me to get rid of them for three months, I would ask nothing better."

"Yes," added François, "thou mayst well say that. My route is through the villainous mountains of Switzerland, where—it is a thing to be hoped—they may, some of them, break their necks. Ah! but how it must have rained princes in that land of savages—America. My party of Comanches, also, are to have a prince for a companion; and may I sup with the devil if it is not the hardest job I have, to find this same prince."

"*Mon dieu!*" exclaimed Jacques, excitedly, "thou hast named the one thing necessary to my comfort. If my prince and his palace were but found, I should be ready to believe in the tales of the Arabian Nights."

"What! is it possible!" cried Edouard. "Are we all in the same boat?"

“What is the name of thy prince?” asked Jacques, leaning over the table.

“Prince Beauharnais!” came, simultaneously, from the lips of Edouard and François.

The three couriers dropped back into their seats, whence they had half arisen, and regarded each other for several moments with looks of grotesque solemnity. Then, as they caught a full appreciation of the absurdity of the whole affair, they broke into loud peals of mocking laughter. After a time, they drew their chairs close together and had a long consultation in a low tone of voice, during which, they were evidently planning some very amusing scheme. On separating, they went in different directions, laughing to themselves and wagging their heads mysteriously.

CHAPTER II.

THE next morning dawned bright and beautiful. No more perfect day could have been selected for a visit, and the whole tribe of delighted Americans prepared themselves to descend upon the Prince. In each party, the question of what they should wear had been long and earnestly discussed, and the different decisions reached were somewhat suggestive of the respective characters of the individuals.

Mrs. Beaver had such a great regard for money and position that she desired to show, in her dress and appearance, that she was wealthy and "to the manner born." Hence, she decided that they should proceed with as much ceremony in calling upon the Prince, as if they were attending a court reception. The ladies of her party, therefore, appeared in full, evening dress, and Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of them. Mrs. Beaver had obliged Mr. Beaver to purchase a complete suit of court costume for himself, also, and his "make-up" was really gorgeous. He was, it is true, a little uncertain whether his chapeau ought to be worn "fore-and-aft" or "athwartships," (nautical terms which Mr. Beaver had picked up on ship-board) but the obliging courier set him right upon this point. His dress sword, as it clinked along on the tile floor of the hotel, was the occasion of great satisfaction to him, and his martial strut

might have been imposing, had his figure been more soldierly, and his bearing less awkward. When moving straight forward on a smooth floor, he had no difficulty, but the moment he removed his chapeau with his left hand and offered his right arm to his wife, he found that his sword had an unpleasant habit of forming the most extraordinary complications with his legs imaginable. Before he returned to his hotel that day, he was fully prepared to believe in the total depravity of inanimate things, especially as applied to dress-swords. About eleven o'clock, however, all was ready, and the party called upon the faithful Jacques to direct them to the palace of the Prince Beauharnais. Jacques responded meekly, and two elegant carriages, with liveried drivers and footmen, drove up to the hotel to take the visitors to the palace.

The Humes had decided that they would show Republican simplicity combined with elegance and taste, and the ladies appeared in appropriate dresses for a morning visit. These were in the latest Paris style, richly but not showily trimmed, and were very becoming to both ladies. Mr. Hume was dressed with great care in a stylish morning suit, and his appearance denoted a quiet, self-reliant gentleman of business. A plain but handsome carriage awaited them, and François promptly seated himself on the box.

The Hansons agreed to make no change in their usual traveling costumes. The great American eagle was soaring in Mr. Hanson's mind, and on every occasion, he took pains to show his disregard of "the forms and ceremonies by which a bloated aristocracy would like to trammel the

free intercourse of man and man." He would drop in on his friend, the Prince, as he would on any one else, without any fuss or parade. If the young man were at home (as of course he would be, according to promise), they would be happy to have his company down the Rhine.

Mrs. Hanson was not so sure how the Prince would understand such an off-hand, free-and-equal kind of treatment, but she recalled how often he had expressed his admiration for the freedom of manners in the West, and therefore she acquiesced in her husband's ideas. Miss Hanson decidedly objected to such an extreme application of republican principles, but her mother pacified her by allowing her to wear a full set of magnificent diamonds, necklace, ear-rings, bracelets and rings.

"*Mon dieu!*!" muttered Edouard, when he saw her, "a miss of seventeen years, wearing diamonds—and in traveling costume at that! Ah! these Americans! these Americans!"

This party, also, started about the same time as the other two, and after a short drive the various carriages drew up before the entrance to a large private palace. This palace, like many others in Europe, contained a fine gallery of paintings, which could be visited by tourists on obtaining a card of admission. The couriers had attended to this matter, so that, on arriving at the entrance, each party was successively admitted by the concierge.

The Hansons were the first to make their appearance; and, as they passed through the heavy, prison-like doors and up the wide staircase, they felt that the realization of their hopes was at hand. Edouard said something in German to a servant in livery, and the latter led the way

to the end of a grand corridor hung with fine paintings, where they entered a medium-sized room filled with portraits. Here the servant left them, and they seated themselves to await the coming of the Prince. They had hardly composed themselves ere footsteps were heard coming down the long corridor. Mrs. Hanson gave a hurried glance into a mirror to assure herself of her good appearance, and Miss Hanson cast down her eyes, while her blushing cheeks and heaving bosom showed that she took more than a trifling interest in the approaching interview. Mr. Hanson had seated himself on the opposite side of the room from his wife; but, as the footsteps were still some distance away, he arose and crossed over, at the same moment glancing down the corridor, as he passed the open door. His eyes were none of the sharpest; hence, he only took in a general impression of the advancing party, without being fully able to distinguish features.

"My gracious! Mrs. Hanson," he exclaimed, in a loud whisper, "the Prince and all his family are coming. The old gentleman is dressed in full court uniform, and there are three or four ladies with him, all in full dress, also. I wonder what they'll think of us," and he looked ruefully at their own plain traveling dresses.

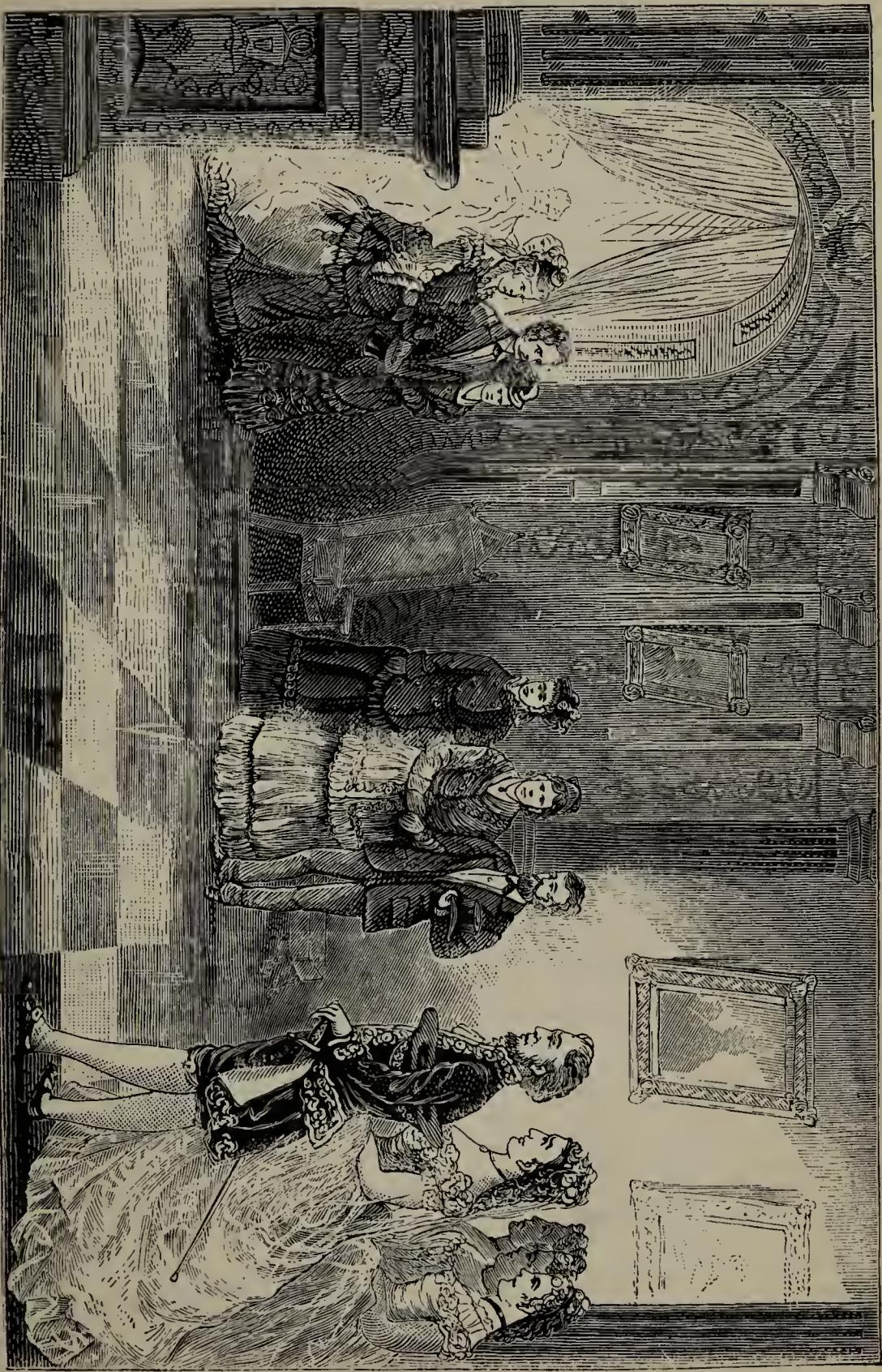
"The Prince is not tall, but he has a commanding air, which would show his rank anywhere," continued Mr. Hanson. "I didn't observe the ladies, since I only caught a glimpse, as I passed before the door."

The party was now close at hand, so that nothing more was said, and the Hansons waited in mute expectancy. Edouard had discreetly remained in the corridor.

Suddenly, a gentleman and lady crossed the threshold of the door. The Hansons rose eagerly, and the newcomers, also, commenced to advance with great cordiality. Unfortunately, the gentleman's sword twisted itself around his legs and nearly tripped him up, while an ejaculation of disappointment and surprise broke simultaneously from the lips of both parties. The supposed Prince and his family proved to be the whole tribe of Beavers, who had arrived only a moment or two after the Hansons.

For half a minute there was not a word spoken, but each party looked at the other in dumb amazement. Then they all commenced talking at once, in a nervous, jerky style, which plainly showed the general embarrassment. The Hansons were not only perplexed at the presence of the Beavers, whom they had left, as they supposed, in the United States, but they were, also, ready to cry at their stupidity in dressing so inappropriately. As they gazed at the elegant toilettes of the Beavers, revealing so many of their well-developed charms, it seemed to Mrs. and Miss Hanson as if they would be willing to sacrifice their "republican principles" to all eternity, for the privilege, at that moment, of being in full dress.

Before many remarks had passed, however, footsteps were again heard approaching, and the opposing factions seated themselves in decorous silence to await the Prince's entrance. Mrs. Beaver's heart swelled in conscious anticipations of triumph, as she glanced from the overpowering toilettes of her blooming group to the sombre traveling dress worn by Miss Hanson. Nearer and nearer came the tread, the step being slow and stately, as became a dignified prince, and again the curtains at each side of the



Again the curtains on each side of the door swayed back as a tall gentleman entered, with a lady on each arm.—Page 136.

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door swayed back as a tall gentleman entered, with a lady on each arm.

It was now Mrs. Beaver's turn to exclaim and look embarrassed; though, for that matter, no one felt particularly at ease. The new-comers were the Humes, toward whom, of all others, the Beavers felt most bitter. The first surprise being over, and the greetings having been made all around, Miss Hume commenced the action. She had the advantage of being dressed more appropriately than any of the others, and, moreover, the *prestige* of her first victory over the Beavers gave her confidence. Besides, she carried more guns than all the rest of the ladies present, owing to her imperturbable coolness and sarcastic wit. She began:

"I declare, I was quite a prophet, was I not, Mrs. Beaver? You know I said we might possibly meet in Munich."

Mrs. Beaver, when fairly under fire, was not an antagonist to be despised, and she, therefore, rallied nobly.

"Why, yes," she replied; "I think you did say something of that kind; but, of course, my dear, I never imagined that you were in earnest. Now, I should have thought, last winter, that Bavaria would have been the last place you would ever have been likely to visit."

"Oh! I don't wonder you thought so," said Miss Hume, "for I presume it is not a particularly attractive country to Americans in general. I imagine you will hardly find it worth staying here more than two or three days."

"Indeed," replied Mrs. Beaver, determined to sink her enemy at the first broadside, "we propose staying here about three months, and the Prince has promised to make it very agreeable for us. We came on his invitation."

As she spoke, she glanced at the other ladies with a smile of conscious superiority, which said, plainly:

"I am sorry for your disappointment, ladies; but you see I have a monopoly of the Prince, and you may as well acknowledge your defeat and retire."

To her surprise, both the Hansons and the Humes returned her smile with interest, as though rather amused than alarmed.

"I have no doubt he would make it very pleasant indeed," spoke up Mrs. Hanson; "but, of course, you will not remain here until his return?"

"His return?" asked Mrs. Beaver, hurriedly. "Is he away?"

"Oh! no," answered Mrs. Hanson, regaining all her self-importance at Mrs. Beaver's exposure of her ignorance and alarm; "he is not away now, but he is going away soon to spend the summer, traveling."

This was the last shot necessary to overpower Mrs. Beaver, and she actually showed her distress in her face.

"Oh! yes," chimed in Miss Hume, jauntily; "he has agreed to make a tour through Switzerland with us. He arranged to meet us here the twentieth of this month, and start immediately."

"Oh! pardon me!" exclaimed Mrs. Hanson, losing her presence of mind and her politeness together; "you must be mistaken. The Prince promised to start *with us*, for a tour down the Rhine and through Germany, on the twenty-fifth of this month."

"Really, you must excuse me from arguing the question," returned Miss Hume, very decisively. "The Prince could not have made two appointments; and here is my

note-book, where he himself wrote down the date and route we should travel. Would you like to see it, Mrs. Hanson?"

This completed the discomfiture of both the Hansons and the Beavers, leaving Miss Hume mistress of the situation. The position of all parties was now awkward in the extreme, and no one can say how they would have settled affairs, had they not been interrupted.

A middle-aged man entered the room through another door than that leading into the corridor, bowed politely to all parties, and said, in very good English :

"Pardon my intrusion, ladies and gentlemen, but a duty I have to execute. I am Herr Althorp, of the Department of Justice. I have been informed that you and other Americans have been deceived by a man, professing to be a son of Prince Beauharnais, of Bavaria. Believe me, he must a swindler have been. There is no prince of that name in Bavaria. Neither has any prince of Bavaria, nor (as far as we can learn) of any other German State, been in America during the winter past. We have had already some inquiries about this man, and the American Minister will tell you that he must an impostor be."

"But who was he, then?" asked Mr. Hume, who was the most self-possessed person in the whole party.

"That can I not tell," replied Herr Althorp. "The account which we have received makes it evident that he had plenty of money, and tried no one to swindle. Yet we cannot tell. It might a wealthy young German have been, who wished the name of Prince to take, for pleasure. But, in republican America,"—here the gentleman smiled sardonically—"he could have derived no advantage from

a title. However, we shall send to our consul in New York to warn the public in America to beware of this man. If you will call on your Minister here, he will show you how you deceived have been," and so saying, the worthy detective (for such he was, of the highest class,) retired as he had entered.

The Beavers did not wait for him to finish, but were half-way out of the door in an instant. The Hansons stood not upon the order of their going, and soon passed the Beavers, whose progress was greatly impeded by Mr. Beaver's sword. The manner in which it crossed between his legs, first one way and then the other, would have made a Stoic laugh. After making several frantic plunges over the dresses of his wife and daughters, Beaver resolutely put on his chapeau and let go of his wife's arm. One more trip sent the chapeau off his head and brought him down on it with both knees. The strain was too much for the white satin unmentionables, and a ragged tear over each knee was the mortifying result. Rising to his feet, Mr. Beaver deliberately unbuckled his sword-belt and led the party, in an ignominious, straggling procession, to their carriages. On arriving at the hotel, the offending Jacques, their courier, was ordered to explain his part in the fiasco, preparatory to instant dismissal. Jacques, therefore, with great politeness, informed them that he knew of no such prince as they had named, but that the palace to which he had taken them had formerly been owned by Eugene, Vicomte de Beauharnais, created a Prince of France by his step-father, Napoleon First, and afterwards Prince d'Eichstdt and Duke of Leuchtenberg, by his father-in-law, Maximilian I., King of Bavaria. The only surviving

descendants of the family resided in Russia (having married into the Russian imperial family), and there was no such living person as the Prince Beauharnais. In this predicament, being required to take them to the Beauharnais palace, which had no existence, Jacques said that he had applied to the police for information. The authorities had recommended him to take the party to the Leuchtenberg palace, promising to send an "agent" to explain matters to the American tourists.

"It seems," continued Jacques, "that inquiries had been made by two other couriers, on the part of American families, and the authorities had so arranged as to bring all three parties together at once, so that one explanation would suffice for all."

Jacques looked so honest in making this statement that the Beavers wholly acquitted him of any intention to make them ridiculous, and they, therefore, abandoned their idea of dismissing him. To tell the truth, they reflected that it would not do to treat him harshly, as he had it in his power to expose them to the ridicule of every one by relating the whole story.

"But, Jacques," suddenly recollected Mr. Beaver, "you told us, as we walked down that infernal corridor, that we should find all the Beauharnais family in the room at the end. Instead of that, we found only that Hanson crowd, and I came near addressing a pompous Kentucky fool as 'Your Highness,' before I saw who it was. How do you account for that?"

"Oh!" replied Jacques, demurely, "*the portraits* of the Beauharnais family were all there."

Mrs. Beaver looked at the courier for a moment, to see

whether he was not poking fun at them, but his face was so simple and respectful that her suspicions were allayed.

The fact was that the whole *contretemps* had been planned by these three scamps of couriers, only the realization of the scheme had far exceeded in absurdity anything they could have expected. Each one made the same explanation as that made by Jacques, and in each case this explanation proved satisfactory, for the same reasons. From that time on, the couriers managed their respective parties just as they saw fit, since none of them dared to offend the men who could spread the story of that ridiculous episode in Munich.

The Hansons, Beavers, and Humes, by mutual consent, kept perfect silence upon the subject of their fiasco, since they were all nearly equally mortified. In consequence, they separated for tours in different directions, and remained abroad more than a year longer than they had at first intended. By the time they returned, the Prince had long been forgotten, and they were not annoyed by disagreeable questions from any one, except Mrs. Pearson and her daughter. These latter would occasionally express the hope that their friends had not been disappointed in visiting the Prince, etc.; but, as Mrs. Pearson was not specially vindictive nor ill-natured, the matter soon dropped, and, until now, no one has ever known the true story of the American Claude Melnotte — Prince Beauharnais.

THE END.

THE TWO SISTERS;
OR, THE AVENGER.

THE TWO SISTERS;

OR, THE AVENGER.

CHAPTER I.

IN the early part of April, 1851, I was attending to some business for the United States Treasury Department, under orders from Mr. Guthrie, the Secretary of the Treasury at that time. Having no one to assist me, I was obliged to do an immense amount of work, and to take advantage of every unoccupied moment, to rest and sleep. I was not, then, living in Chicago, but was temporarily boarding at the Sherman House, in that city, my own home being at Dundee, in Kane County, Illinois. One evening, I had retired early, exhausted by a hard day's work, and had just fallen into a sound sleep, when I was awakened by my old friend, William L. Church, the sheriff of Cook County, Illinois. He was accompanied by two other gentlemen, whom he introduced to me, as soon as I could make a hasty toilet and admit them to my room. One was Deputy-Sheriff Green, of Coldwater, Michigan, and the other, William Wells, of Quincy, a small town about six miles north of Coldwater. Mr.

Church said that he wished me to listen to the story which Mr. Wells had to tell, and to give my services to aid in capturing two of the worst villains that ever went unhung, as well as to save their victims from their clutches.

Mr. Wells seemed to be about twenty-one years old, and had an erect carriage, which gave him a more manly and determined look than is usual in young men of his age. Drawing around the stove, we listened to his sad, sad story, which, at times, threw him into fits of violent passion, and at others, overwhelmed him with grief. I shall not attempt to tell the story in the disconnected manner in which he gave it to us, but will combine, with his account, the further information which we obtained at the close of my researches in the case. Of course, many of the details here given were unknown to young Wells at the time he called, with Mr. Church, to ask my assistance; but enough was known positively, beside much that was evident inferentially, to make my blood boil as I listened, and to draw tears even from Mr. Church and Mr. Green, accustomed as they were to scenes of agony and sorrow. The following is the story of Mr. Wells, together with many incidents which were developed later:

CHAPTER II.

ERASTUS B. WELLS, William's father, was about fifty-five years of age, and had long been a merchant in Boston. He had been successful in business, and had been a wealthy man, up to less than a year previous, at which time, he had been on the point of retiring from active life and establishing his son in his place. Mr. Wells was well known and highly respected in Boston, and had many friends and acquaintances. He was a man of large heart and generous instincts, so that he had been frequently asked to endorse accommodation paper for his business associates, and had given the use of his name and credit very freely—too freely, as events proved. A very dull season in trade came on, and, although his own business was not seriously affected, his friends went down, one after another, leaving him to meet their debts, for which he had made himself liable. In consequence, Mr. Wells, himself, was called upon to pay the notes which he had endorsed for his friends, and the result was financial ruin. After selling all his property, he found himself stripped of his whole fortune, (except a small sum) with a family dependent upon him for support.

While his affairs prospered, he had been blessed with one of the happiest homes imaginable. His wife was industrious and loving, and his children, of whom he had four, obedient and affectionate. His children's names

and ages were as follows: William, twenty-one years; Mary, seventeen years; Alice, fifteen years, and Emma, nine years. Mary was already a well-developed woman. She was tall, but her figure was compact and plump. Her face was almost a perfect oval in shape, and her eyes were large, and expressive, jet black in color, fringed with long, fine lashes. She was noticeable for the beauty of her soft, clear, brunette complexion, which was a rich olive, deepening into a delicate red in her cheeks. She had a small mouth, red, full lips and very regular, pearly teeth. But her greatest charm was her sweet expression, which spoke directly to the hearts of all who met her. She did not belong to the class of sentimental beauties, who look as if a strong wind would blow them away; but, on the contrary, she possessed a glow of health and flow of spirits which added greatly to her attractiveness. Hers was a strong nature, kept in check by firm, religious principles.

Alice had reached the age "where womanhood and childhood meet." She was not as tall as Mary, nor was her figure as fully developed. She had her mother's eyes, dark grey in color, and she almost rivaled Mary in the beauty of her complexion. When she laughed, she showed such pretty teeth, lips and dimples, that many considered her the beauty of the family.

Mrs. Wells was a noble woman, and, in the hour of her husband's distress, she showed a courage superior to all misfortunes. William and the girls, also, were sources of great comfort to their father by the cheerfulness with which they met the change in their circumstances. Mary, as the eldest daughter, felt that it was her duty to take an active part in the struggle against poverty, which was now

commencing. Although naturally timid, she had the courage to carry out any plan which she considered right and necessary. The Wells family had not gone into society a great deal; hence, they were spared much of the heartless treatment that is so generally inflicted in fashionable circles upon those whom fate deprives of wealth. Still, there were many among their acquaintances, who dropped them as soon as they became poor. Although they keenly felt these slights, they did not give way to useless repinings, but adapted their habits and mode of life to their changed circumstances, with cheerful resignation and contentment. In a short time, nearly all of Mr. Wells' property had been absorbed in the payment of the debts of his friends, and he had only a small sum left. He pondered for some time as to what would be the best course for him to pursue. Many of his friends advised him to take advantage of the credit which his established reputation for honesty and business capacity would command, and start in business again. But the shock of his losses, although not caused by any neglect of duty on his part, had so unnerved him, that he felt it would be impossible, at his age, to commence at the foot of the ladder, perhaps only to be again dashed to the ground before he could reach a secure position. He, therefore, took a small cottage in Boston, temporarily, while settling his affairs, and moved thither such necessary furniture as he was able to reserve from the sale of his effects.

Having finally satisfied all his creditors, he had remaining only a few hundred dollars. He then decided to go West and purchase a farm in the State of Michigan, which was, at that time, rapidly filling up with New Eng-

land settlers. The soil was rich, and the country was well wooded and watered, so that farms, which could then be bought from the Government at low rates, would become worth thousands of dollars in a few years. He had money enough to buy a quarter-section of land, and to stock his farm with a few cows and the necessary oxen and farming implements required in breaking and working a new piece of ground. He proposed to put up a comfortable log-house, where, with good health, he hoped that they might soon become independent—for he felt that no one was so truly independent as a successful farmer, owning a well-stocked farm, free from debt.

The girls were quite delighted at the prospect, not only on account of the future pecuniary advantages, but because it would remove them from the probability of contact with those who had known them when wealthy. The undesired pity of their friends was almost as hard to bear as the contemptuous sneers of their enemies; so that they were not sorry to make a decided change of residence. It did not take long to prepare for the journey, and in a few days they were westward bound.

The tracks of the Michigan Southern Railroad had been just laid as far as Laporte, Indiana, and many gangs of men were at work all along the line, ballasting the road and putting it into smooth running order. The opening of the road had made a large area of valuable farming lands easily accessible, and settlers were pouring in fast.

Mr. Wells bought a quarter-section of land (one hundred and sixty acres) near Quincy, Michigan, where he put up a small dwelling-house and barn, investing what little money he had left, in live-stock and farming imple-

ments. Quincy was a mere village, consisting of a tavern, two or three stores, two small churches and a few dwelling-houses.

The Wells family soon found that there were many little things required which, having no money, they could not obtain, as Mr. Wells would not go in debt for anything. He could not expect much return from the first year on a new farm, especially as he was comparatively a novice in the business, not having had any experience since he was a boy, working on his father's farm in New England. Both he and William, however, worked very hard, and succeeded in fully realizing their anticipations for the first year's crops, though, of course, the returns were no more than sufficient for their bare subsistence. The prospects for the ensuing year were very bright, provided they could get through the winter safely, as the farm was a fine one, and their late-and-early labor had put it into excellent condition. But, as winter came on, it was evident that it would be difficult to provide the necessities of life for the whole family until Spring.

Accordingly, as soon as the cold weather put an end to farm-work, William applied for and obtained a place as foreman of a gang of men at work on the railroad, a position he was well qualified to fill. All his wages, he brought home and put into the general family fund, which Mr. Wells disbursed as needed. It also occurred to Mary and Alice that they might contribute something to the family treasury, (beside getting their own living,) by hiring out for the winter to do housework in Coldwater, the nearest town of any size.

In the West, at that time, (and it is so, even now, in

the country,) the domestic servant held a much higher place, socially, than at present. She was looked upon more as a companion than as a servant; and the daughters of wealthy farmers often worked out for small wages, rather than remain at home toiling for nothing. Mary's acquaintances in Boston would have probably raised their hands in holy horror, if they had heard that the Wells girls were working out; but it did not in the least affect their social standing in Coldwater. In fact, it rather raised them, as it should have done, in the estimation of their neighbors.

William, therefore, obtained places for them in Coldwater; Mary taking a place as domestic in the family of Mr. Cox, a merchant, while Alice took a similar position in a restaurant at the depot, kept by a man named Blake. Their wages were one dollar and fifty cents for Mary, and one dollar for Alice. The girls soon settled down to their duties, and got along unusually well. Mary generally finished her work earlier than Alice, and then went down to Blake's to assist her. Having completed their daily tasks, they would have a pleasant chat, or take a short walk, but they never received any company. Alice, while waiting on the table, would be polite to all, and would pleasantly answer any questions put to her; but as soon as her duties were finished, she held herself quietly aloof from every one.

Mrs. Blake did a fair share of the work herself, although she had one servant besides Alice. She was a good little woman, of very pleasing appearance, and had been married eight or nine years, though she had no children.

Mr. Blake was a remarkably handsome man. He was six feet in height, and carried himself with a very erect, military air. His features were regular and clear-cut, and he was the picture of good health. His hair and silky moustache were jet black, and his complexion, though dark, was clear and smooth. He was generally dressed in excellent taste, with the exception that he showed a weakness for jewelry. He wore a showy diamond pin, and frequently looked at his watch, a very valuable English, gold hunting-case time-piece, which he carried attached to a massive gold chain. At that time, gold watches were not as common in the West as now, and Blake displayed his very ostentatiously. In general, however, he was very agreeable in his manners. He attended very little to the business of the restaurant, leaving it to his wife, while he went about the country a great deal, driving a fast horse, which he owned. He was away from home most of the time, in fact, going sometimes to Toledo, Detroit, Laporte, and Chicago.

Coldwater lay a quarter of a mile distant from the depot, and Blake rarely went to the town; though he was always very civil and polite to any of the residents who visited his restaurant. About all that was known of him in Coldwater, was that he had kept the restaurant for two years, and seemed to be making money. Stations then were very far apart on the railroad, and travelers frequently drove long distances to take the train, remaining at Blake's over night and leaving by the morning train next day. Blake's business was, therefore, that of a hotel-keeper; his bar-keeper, under Mrs. Blake's superintendence, attended to most of the work in Blake's absence,

and accounted to Mrs. Blake every night for the money received.

Although Alice was an inmate of the house, she was engaged in sewing for Mrs. Blake most of the day, and saw nothing of the boarders, except at meal-times. Hence, as far as the girls knew, the restaurant was a highly respectable place, and it was not until I had rent the veil of mystery surrounding it, that they learned the true character of the persons who made it their rendezvous.

Blake, as we subsequently learned, was in reality a most villainous and dangerous man. For twelve years he had been a professional gambler and swindler. He had been in the habit of traveling on the Mississippi and its tributaries, always as a gambler or roper-in. He had been seen in Dubuque; was well acquainted in Keokuk and Cairo; had gone up the Missouri to Independence, and, thence, out on the plains; Natchez, Vicksburg, Memphis, and New Orleans — all were familiar haunts; and, as a cool, desperate villain, he had an extensive reputation, though he had not yet been exposed at Coldwater, where little or nothing was known of him.

His object in following up the line of the new Michigan Southern Railroad, was to take advantage of the men at work on the road, and fleece them of their hard-earned wages, by gambling games. His restaurant, in reality, was a regular gambling den, and was the resort, not only of all the fast men and gamblers of Coldwater, but, also, of many young men, sons of rich farmers in the vicinity. There were a variety of games played; but the gambling portion of the house was removed from the rooms of Mrs.

Blake and Alice, and no sound of the games was ever heard outside of the gambling rooms. For experienced gamblers, there were "square" games of poker, faro and roulette, Blake, whenever he was at home, officiating as dealer; at other times the rooms were closed, except for poker and other games not requiring a "banker." For farmers, laborers, and inexperienced young men, Blake had a special faro box, arranged in such a way as to enable the dealer to know every card before slipping it out, and to make it win or lose at his pleasure. He had inveigled so many persons into his clutches, that there were a number of rumors afloat about the character of the house and its proprietor, but they were so vague as never to have reached either William or Mary.

About eleven miles from Coldwater, was the little town of Bronson, situated about half a mile from the railroad station of the same name. The only building at the station, was a tavern, kept by one Harris, a great friend of Blake. It was afterward discovered that, at Burr Oak, six miles from Harris' tavern, a gang of counterfeiters were at work; and, in order not to attract attention to Burr Oak, most of the gang stopped with Harris. The latter was a most consummate villain, and his wife was even worse; so that congenial spirits were not wanting among the keepers of the tavern and their guests.

Among the frequenters of Blake's gambling rooms and Harris' tavern, was a young man named Sloan, son of a well-to-do farmer near Coldwater. He had lived with his parents, until he had exhausted their patience by his extravagance and dissipation; he had then left home to take a place as stage-driver. At first, he had driven a stage

from Coldwater north to Lansing. Soon becoming a most proficient "knight of the whip," he had gone to Chicago to drive for Frink & Walker, the owners of all the stage lines running north, west and south from that city.

In those days, lively scenes could have been witnessed in front of the Tremont House, where all the stages started from every morning. Old drivers would try to see how near they could come to overturning their vehicles without doing so, and green hands, in their efforts at imitation, would come to grief, and be hauled from the ruins of a general smash-up.

Sloan had learned to cut a circle in the street with a four-horse team and a heavy stage, and was as good a driver as could be found. Hence, he had easily obtained a stage on one of the western routes, but had taken leave of absence, and come home to spend the winter with his friends. Up to the time he left Coldwater, Sloan had not been a vicious man; but stage-driving had not been a good school for his morals. He was about five feet nine inches in height, full-faced, dark complexioned, and had dark eyes and hair. He wore heavy side-whiskers, and a Kos-suth hat, which he kept on his head, in-doors and out. He would have been very good looking but for his rakish, dissipated appearance. He was well acquainted with Blake and his bar-keeper, Jim Kelly, so that he was quite at home about the restaurant.

I have now presented all of the *dramatis personæ* of the tragedy which was shortly enacted, and will proceed to give the particulars thereof, as they occurred.

CHAPTER III.

MARY was in the habit of calling frequently to see Alice, and soon became well acquainted with Mrs. Blake. While in the latter's rooms, Blake would occasionally meet Mary, and, in this way, he came to know her. He hardly noticed either of the girls, as a rule, though he sometimes spoke to Alice, while she was waiting on him at table. Once or twice, apparently by accident, he overtook Mary and Alice when on their way to town, and walked part way with them. Occasionally, also, he walked with them to Mrs. Cox's, and returned with Alice. He was always very respectful, however, and seemed to pay very little attention to them.

Three months passed quickly away without any incidents of consequence. William came often to see his sisters, and they were allowed to go home once a month, to pass Sunday. Every week they sent their wages home; and their spirits were kept up by frequent letters from their parents, and by the thought that the little sum at home was increasing slowly by their assistance.

About this time, Sloan began to notice Alice, and, in order to see her as much as possible, began to take his meals at the restaurant. While Alice was waiting on him, he used to say sweet things to her; but, though she always waited upon him promptly, she paid no attention to his sweet speeches and loving looks: If he attempted any familiarity, she always walked out of the room.

There were a number of young men, farmers' sons, clerks, and students from Coldwater, who were very anxious to get acquainted with Mary and Alice; but the latter were quietly reserved, and they coldly repelled all advances. The decided manner with which the sisters shunned all gentlemen's society, greatly exasperated these young men, and they talked a great deal about the girls. Sloan was particularly angry, and he tried his best to get introduced into Blake's family, but without success; as Mrs. Blake approved of the girls' conduct, and aided them as much as possible.

In the early part of March, Mrs. Blake decided to pay a visit to her mother, who lived in Ypsilanti. As she would need some one to superintend the restaurant during her absence, it occurred to her that Mary would be just the person for the place. Accordingly, when Mary next visited Alice, Mrs. Blake suggested the plan to her, and urged her warmly to accept the position of house-keeper for two or three months. Mrs. Blake said that the winter's work had completely tired her out, and that she wished to visit her family, in order to get rested. She had full confidence in Mary, who, though so young, was, nevertheless, very systematical and orderly; she was sure that Mary would manage the domestic arrangements of the restaurant as well as she could, herself.

Mary did not like to leave Mrs. Cox. She got along well with the family, and liked her place. On the other hand, Mrs. Blake offered her two dollars a week, to take full charge of everything at the restaurant; and, though she would have more responsibility, it would give her, also a more independent position. There were two other

important advantages: the increase of wages, and the fact that she would always be with Alice. They had several talks upon the subject, and, finally, Mrs. Blake offered her two dollars and fifty cents a week, and Alice two dollars, if Mary would accept the situation of house-keeper, while Mrs. Blake was away. This decided the matter, and Mary agreed to the terms. She felt that she could not afford to refuse an offer, which was not only advantageous pecuniarily, but which would enable her to live with Alice.

When Mary informed Mrs. Cox of her intentions, that lady was quite displeased; and, in order to induce her to remain, Mrs. Cox repeated a number of the ugly rumors that were afloat with regard to Blake and his restaurant. Among other things, she said that there had been a bowling-alley attached to the restaurant, which had burned down one night, very strangely; and it was strongly suspected that Blake, himself, had fired the building, in order to get the insurance on it, which was very heavy. Mr. Cox came in while they were talking, and said that Mary must not mention what Mrs. Cox had told her, because there was no certainty of the truth of the story; though such were the suspicions of some of the people living in Coldwater. It was, also, publicly reported that Blake kept a gambling-house, and he advised her not to go to such a place. Mary was horrified at these stories; but, at the same time, it seemed strange that Mrs. Cox should not have told her these things before, knowing that her sister was employed in the restaurant, and that she, herself, often went there. She told Alice about the rumors, and asked her whether she had seen anything wrong about Blake, or

the restaurant. Alice replied that she had not; but that Blake had always been quiet and gentlemanly in his words and actions; and that the restaurant, though having a bar attached, had been remarkably orderly and well-conducted. They, finally, agreed to lay the matter before William, and abide by his decision.

William was working on the railroad between Coldwater and Quincy, and often visited Coldwater station on business, always stopping to see Alice when he came there. The next time that Alice saw him, she told him about the rumors concerning Blake's restaurant, and asked what he thought of them. He said that he had heard such rumors, and had closely questioned the track-men and others as to the truth of the stories; but they had unanimously pronounced them false. With regard to the charge of setting fire to the bowling-alley, the fact that the insurance had been paid without question, was sufficient evidence of Blake's innocence. William considered Mrs. Blake's offer too good to be refused, and, therefore, advised Mary to accept it. Alice informed Mary of William's decision, the next day, and Mary gave Mrs. Cox notice that she would leave in a week.

At the end of that time, she moved down to Mrs. Blake's, and was given a small but pleasant room with Alice, on the second floor. Mrs. Blake remained a week, in order to instruct Mary in her new duties; and then, feeling that matters would run smoothly without her, she packed her clothes, preparatory to a visit of three months.

Mrs. Blake was rather jealous of her husband, but she knew the purity of the girls' characters so well, that she had no fears of them. What she did fear, however, was

that Blake would bring strange women into the house, in her absence; and, to guard against this, she cautioned Mary not to allow any straggling women to stop at the restaurant.

"If any women come 'round," said she to Mary, "you must insist on turning them out. If Blake objects, you write to me. I shall be only sixty miles away, and I will come over and soon oust them. I have all confidence in you, Mary, and so has Blake; and he has agreed to let you have your own way, while I am gone."

Blake then took his wife to Ypsilanti in his light cutter, the sleighing being good, and returned in about a week. He brought a letter from his wife for Mary, and had a long talk with the latter about the business of the house. He asked her a number of questions about the financial and culinary arrangements, but showed no more freedom of manner than when his wife was at home.

Mary and Alice were now very happy. They had good situations, and, as they were always together, began to feel almost as contented as if they were in their own home. Mary had no difficulty in managing the house, and all went on smoothly. Kelly, the bar-keeper, occasionally came in to turn over the money from the bar, and to order extra meals for late passengers; but he was always very respectful to both girls.

Sloan was at the restaurant most of the time, and he used to sit in the dining-room, with other fast young men, every evening, the bar being in the same room. If anything disorderly occurred, Mary would walk into the dining-room to see what was the matter, and immediately the disturbance would cease. It was a strange sight to

see the manner in which the worst rowdies cowered before this slight girl of seventeen.

Alice did not possess her sister's power of command, and found it very hard to control some of the customers. Many of the young men tried to make the acquaintance of Alice at table, and several of them sent invitations to parties, etc., to both girls, but no answers were ever returned. In consequence, it was generally conceded that the sisters "put on a good many airs" for girls in their position, and the young men were duly indignant. Sloan was particularly angry at Alice, for whom he had conceived a violent passion, and he never ceased to think about her. Alice became almost afraid of him, and said to Mary, once:

"That man makes me tremble every time he looks at me."

The California gold mines had only recently been discovered, and the "gold fever" was at its height in Coldwater. It seemed as if every one was preparing to start for the "diggings," and farmers were offering their farms for sale at very low prices, to obtain the means to carry them across the plains, to the land of promise in California. The stories of the wealth to be obtained by a few months' work in the mines had affected all classes of people, and even the oldest and steadiest were tempted.

It is not to be wondered, then, that men like Blake and Sloan should have turned toward the new *El Dorado* with longing hearts. Blake was about tired of a settled life, and, moreover, he was aware that his character was becoming known, and that some of his dupes would be apt to bring a hornet's nest about his ears, some day,

which might result in still more unpleasant revelations with regard to him. He, therefore, began to make preparations for a move, keeping his intentions perfectly secret from every one except Sloan, with whom he now became very intimate, indeed.

Blake needed such a man as Sloan for a tool, and so, drew him on to commit the crime which they were then engaged in planning, in order to prepare him for other schemes of villainy, when Blake should require his services. Sloan was greatly flattered at being noticed by Blake, who was much superior in education and intellect to any of the men in that vicinity, besides being a dashing, daring sort of a fellow, with great ability to fascinate his associates. Thus, by flattering Sloan's vanity, Blake obtained a complete mastery over him; and it was only necessary for Blake to say the word, to lead Sloan into any wickedness that might turn up. These two now remained together constantly, making frequent visits to Harris, at Bronson station. Harris would sometimes come back with them, as, also, two men known as Dick and Joe. These latter were a bad lot, and showed their hardened characters in their faces.

Two weeks passed thus very pleasantly to the sisters. Their work was not tiresome, and they were always happy in each other's society. During the day, they were quite busy, but, after seven o'clock, they usually sat down in the sitting-room and read aloud to each other, or talked over past pleasures and future prospects.

All went along quietly at Blake's, until one morning the great equinoctial gales commenced, and brought with them a heavy snow-storm. Very few customers visited the res-

taurant that day, and those who did brave the storm, went home before evening, leaving only Blake, Kelly, Sloan, and the sisters in the house.

After tea the girls went into the sitting-room, where they sat, listening to the storm, and looking into the fire. In a short time, Blake came in and conversed with them for some minutes. He was dressed with great care, and he made himself very agreeable, yet without showing the least want of respect. He was soon called out by Sloan, who told him that Harris had just come. As Sloan went out, he glanced at Alice with that devilish expression in his eye that always frightened her, and she was so alarmed that she begged Mary to go to bed. Norah had already gone to her room; and, as there was no prospect of any one coming for meals at that hour, Mary agreed, and the sisters prepared to retire.

They went to the back door and glanced out at the storm. The snow almost blinded them, but they saw that there was a light in the stable, and caught a glimpse of Blake, Sloan, and a stranger, moving about, the stranger being Harris. There was nothing unusual in this, so they closed the door and went to bed.

Blake's room was opposite the sitting-room, and, next to it, was the room of Norah, the Irish cook. The sitting-room was between the kitchen and the dining-room; the sisters' bed-room was up-stairs, directly over the main outside entrance to the dining-room.

The girls little thought that at that moment the plot was being planned, and the arrangements made, which should forever blast their lives. As they knelt to ask God's aid and blessing, Blake and his attendant scoundrels



They went to the back door and glanced out at the storm.—Page 165.

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were preparing for a crime most foul. But, ignorant of the depravity of these men, the sisters retired in peace, and quiet soon reigned over the house.

CHAPTER IV.

A BOUT midnight, a loud knocking was commenced at the main entrance, which quickly awoke the girls overhead. After a prolonged pounding, they heard a gruff voice, saying :

“Open the door! I am the sheriff, and I have a warrant to arrest you, Blake, for setting fire to your bowling-alley.”

The storm still howled fiercely, and the snow was drifting in immense sheets against the window-panes; but far above the noise of the storm, the terrified girls heard the knocks, and the stern voice commanding the inmates to open, in the name of the law. Not a sound was heard within the house, and again came the voice :

“Open the door! I am the sheriff, and I shall break down the door, if you don’t let me in at once.”

Then came a heavy thud, and the order :

“Break down the door, boys! I’m bound to have that scoundrel, Blake.”

Crash followed crash, the door yielded, and soon a number of heavy footsteps were heard, crossing the dining-room, and rushing about the lower part of the house. The men ran hither and thither, searching the rooms below, and blaspheming in a manner terrible to hear. They entered Norah’s room, dragged her out of bed, and demanded where Blake was concealed. Not finding him

there, the search was continued. Suddenly, the girls heard a stealthy footstep outside their door, and then, a hasty fumbling at their latch. The door flew open, and Blake, in a voice, seemingly choked with terror, said :

“Oh! girls, hide me! hide me! They are going to arrest me !”

Before they could collect their scattered senses, Blake sprang into the bed, and forced himself down between the two girls, who shrank away, powerless and almost fainting from fright. The men in search were close behind Blake, however; and, as he drew the clothes up over his head, they burst into the room with a yell of exultation. The supposed sheriff and his men proved to be Sloan, Harris, Dick, and Joe.

“Ha! ha! ha!” laughed Sloan, fiendishly; “this is where you spend your nights, is it, Blake? You’re a sly coon, but we’ve treed you at last.”

As he spoke, he seized the bed-clothes and, with a fling, threw them over the foot of the bed, disclosing Blake, in his night-shirt, lying between the nearly insensible girls.

Blake sprang up and said, in a horrified tone :

“Oh! gentlemen, gentlemen, you have gone too far! I was so frightened — as I really thought you had a warrant — that I rushed in here and begged the girls to hide me. The girls are virtuous, I assure you, but my indiscretion has placed them in an awful position. It is terrible! terrible! Don’t, for God’s sake, let any one know of this. Come down stairs, and I will treat you to all the whiskey and brandy you want. This affair must be hushed up! The girls are as innocent as babes. It is all my fault.”

“Ha! ha!” sneered Sloan; “that you, Alice? Blake

is smart, but I never knew he was a Mormon before," and coming to the bed-side, with an insulting remark, he grasped Alice in his arms.

"Quit that sort of business," said Blake. "The girls are as pure as snow, and I won't have them insulted. Go down stairs, and keep quiet about this."

"Well," said Sloan, with an oath, "I'm going to have a kiss anyhow," saying which, he clasped Alice close, and kissed her.

The poor child was powerless to resist, and an attempt to scream died away on her lips. Mary was pale as death, and she lay motionless, with a look of horror on her face, that would have moved less hardened wretches to pity.

"Go down stairs, I say," repeated Blake, and all but Sloan left the room.

The latter again seized Alice, but Blake succeeded in forcing him from the room, and then returned to the door.

"Mary," he said, "I have done you both a great wrong, but those men frightened me so much that I did not know what I was doing. You know that I never wished to do you an injury. Oh! forgive me! please forgive me!"

Mary's mouth was parched and dry, so that she could not speak. She seemed to be the victim of a hideous nightmare, which rendered her will and muscles powerless.

Blake went on speaking:

"Mary, you won't tell this to my wife, will you? She would feel terribly, if she were to know it. I will make it all right with the boys down-stairs. All they want is liquor. Won't you forgive me, and promise not to tell my wife?"

For a time, neither of the girls could speak, but Mary was, at length, able to find her voice.

“Leave the room, and let us alone,” she said. “I don’t know what I am doing. I am going crazy. Go! go! I pray God I may never see daylight.”

Blake saw that any further annoyance might make them desperate, and, therefore, went out. The girls lay in a nervous stupor for some minutes after his departure, but finally Mary got up and closed the door. There was no lock nor bolt upon it; so she motioned Alice to assist her, and, together, they dragged their trunks against it, and barricaded it as well as possible. Neither could speak, but Mary opened her arms and clasped Alice to her bosom in a loving embrace. Their breaking hearts were relieved by a flood of tears, and crawling into bed, they passed the remainder of the night in each other’s arms, trembling like leaves at every gust of wind that swept around the house.

After dressing, Blake went into the bar-room; there he found Kelly up, dealing out drinks to the scoundrels, who were laughing over their success in invading the privacy of the poor sisters’ chamber. Blake tried to calm them down and induce them to go home; but they were partly intoxicated, and were determined to stay as long as they pleased.

Sloan said, with an oath, that he had never had so sweet a kiss before, and that Alice was bound to be his.

“Shut up, Sloan, you’re a fool,” said Blake.

“Don’t talk to me that way, or I’ll put a knife into you,” muttered Sloan.

“I tell you, you’re a d—d fool,” said Blake. “Don’t

you know how to act your part any better? If you don't take care, we'll go to the penitentiary. If you'll keep your mouth shut and leave matters to me, we shall have a good thing out of this."

"That's so," coincided Dick. "I have done some shrewd things in my time, and I can always do well, if I have a good chum."

By this time, Harris had the sleigh at the door, the party took a parting drink, and in a few minutes, Harris, Dick, and Joe were on the road to Bronson.

When they had gone, Blake turned to Sloan and said:

"Now, Sloan, the time for rough work has not yet come. It will come, bye-and-bye; but, in the meantime, keep cool, don't talk much, and go slow."

"I'll have another drink, at all events," said Sloan, with an oath; "and mind you remember the bargain—Alice is to be mine!"

"Hush up! hush up!" said Blake impatiently. "I wish I had never known you. You're a cursed fool, and will spoil everything by your d—d gas."

Sloan took a deep drink of brandy, and, without another word, started out into the storm, to walk to Coldwater, where he had a room.

"Kelly," said Blake, "be sure to tell Norah that the row to-night was only a spree on the part of the boys, and that they had a mighty fine time. I don't think we shall have any trouble with Mary and Alice, but we must treat them kindly. If they should go home, their father and brother would soon be after us, and we should have to leave the country. If we keep friendly with the girls, we shall be safe; but we must prevent them from running

away in the first alarm and excitement. There is no fear of seeing William here to-morrow, as his gang will be busy clearing the snow from the track."

Having settled everything satisfactorily, Blake and Kelly took a "night-cap" of brandy before retiring; and, in a short time, the house was again quiet.

CHAPTER V.

THE object of this invasion of the girls' chamber will be readily divined. Blake and Sloan had determined to go to California together, and to take Mary and Alice with them. They were perfectly aware that the consent of the sisters could never be obtained; hence, they had decided to take them by force. This could only be done by so terrifying their victims as to prevent them from making any disturbance while traveling, and this scheme was the preliminary step. The scene which transpired in the bar-room, after Sloan called Blake out of the sitting-room, in the early part of the evening, was narrated to me by Sloan, after his capture; I give it, in order to show the villainous character of the men, and the way in which the plan was carried out.

Blake, Sloan, Harris, and Kelly sat in the bar-room, talking on general topics for about an hour. Blake was restless and nervous, frequently looking at his watch, and muttering:

“I wonder what keeps them.”

“They will be here, sure,” said Harris. “I never knew Dick to fail. I am afraid he has stopped to play cards, and, if so, it will be hard for him to break away. I never knew a fellow to get bound up in cards as he does.”

Blake walked to the outside door, peered out a moment, and then crept noiselessly up to the door of the sisters'

room, where he listened a short time. On returning to the bar-room, he said, as he sat down :

“They are sound asleep.”

“Give us some whiskey,” said Harris, and he poured out drinks for Sloan and himself. Blake neither drank nor spoke, but maintained a moody silence, looking anxious and irritable.

Harris took up a pack of cards and began to deal them.

“No, I don’t want to play—I am too much worried,” exclaimed Blake, brushing the cards away. “I wish Dick would come !”

For some time, little was done or said. Blake walked up and down uneasily, occasionally opening the door to look out. At length, he asked :

“Harris, how in the world will you ever get home? This storm is the fiercest I have known for some years. Shall you and Dick go home to-night?” Then, without waiting for an answer, he continued : “It is better that you should go, as it might create suspicion, if you stayed here.”

“I don’t fear the storm,” said Harris ; “and shall get home all right.”

In a short time, Dick and his friend, Joe, walked in, covered with snow. Blake grasped them warmly by the hand, and said to Dick :

“I am so glad to see you ! I began to think you had forgotten me.”

“No,” replied Dick ; “I am always on hand in an affair of this sort, though I don’t yet know exactly what’s wanted of me. I don’t mind the snow. When I was sheriff of Butler County, Pennsylvania, I had to go out on a night

similar to this, and I tell you, I made money before morning. The boys robbed an old man with lots of money, and I came down on 'em just in time to — make 'em divide! The next morning, the old cuss met me when I had my share in my pocket, and put the case in my hands (being sheriff, you know,) to hunt up the thieves; but I never caught them, ha! ha! ha!" Then, slapping Joe on the shoulder, he added: "I think I can lay my hand on one of the boys that did that job, now," and he burst into a fit of satanic laughter, in which he was joined by all except Blake, who took no notice, whatever.

A whispered consultation was then held between Blake, Sloan, Harris, Joe, and Dick — the bar-keeper being half asleep behind the bar. Blake explained what he wished done and the other ruffians readily coincided. At eleven o'clock, Blake took a glass of brandy, his first drink that evening, and again looked out, down the track. Not a light was to be seen, and the snow was piled in great drifts over the track; it was quite evident that no trains could pass over the line for some time.

"Now is a good time to commence operations, is it not?" said Blake.

"Yes," said Dick. "Harris, hitch up the team, and we'll get ready to start for Bronson."

Blake wished them good night, told Kelly to lock up the house, and went to bed. Sloan, Dick, Harris, and Joe took one more drink, and then went out to the stable. Kelly locked the door and tumbled into bed, at about half past eleven o'clock.

The events of the remainder of that terrible night have already been given, and I now return to the sisters.

CHAPTER VI.

ALL through the still hours of that gloomy night, the sisters mingled their tears together, almost speechless from physical fear and mental agony.

“What shall we do! what shall we do!” murmured Alice.

“I don’t know,” said Mary. “What *can* we do?”

What, indeed, could two innocent girls, the oldest but seventeen, do in a struggle with such crafty villains?

Toward daybreak, they fell into a troubled sleep, but by seven o’clock, they again awoke to all the horrors of their situation. After dressing, they remained in their room some time, fearing to go down stairs. They finally mustered up the courage to go into the kitchen, where they found Norah, going on with her work, as if nothing had happened. The sisters glanced at her in a half-frightened way, and she said:

“Shure, Mary, and didn’t yees hear the row last night? Faith, thin, they had a foine time playin’ their tricks on the masther. Didn’t yees hear them, Alice?”

Then was taken the fatal step which placed the sisters in the power of the scoundrels.

“No,” said Alice; “was anything going on?”

“There was, indade,” replied Norah. “Yees must ha’ slept sound the night, not to ha’ heerd thim bys that was

here about midnight. There was a whole pack of them, and, d'yees know, they broke in the door to the bar-room. The blaggards came into my room, aven, and axed if the masther was there. But, after all, they was very daacent gintlemin on a bit of a lark, and they spent their money fraly. Kelly spakes well of them."

"We did not hear anything," said Alice; "at least, I did not; did you, Mary?"

Mary did not answer. She could not decide what to do; but, as Alice had adopted that course, she thought best not to contradict her. She, therefore, pretended not to have heard the question, and walked into the sitting-room. She dusted the furniture mechanically, and then went to the window and looked out. On every side, she saw evidences of the severity of the storm. The snow was two feet deep on a level, and the roads were all blocked by almost impassable drifts. No one would venture out that day, unless compelled by some great necessity.

The girls prepared breakfast as usual; but, when Blake came in, they were unable to look him in the face. He sat down alone with them, as there were no boarders in the house, and talked in a very gentle and sorrowful tone about the unfortunate occurrence of the previous night. He said that he would take care that no harm should come to them. The boys had only tried to have a good joke at his expense, little thinking it would turn out so seriously. He would see that no one should ever hear anything about the matter, and that the girls' reputation should not suffer.

The sisters said nothing, whatever, finishing their

breakfast in complete silence. After their work was done, they went into the sitting-room, to talk over what had happened.

"Mary," said Alice, "I want William to take us both home. How I wish he would come up this morning!"

"I do not intend to remain here any longer," said Mary. "I would go home at once, if it were possible; but look at the roads! They are impassable, and the railroad is worse. Kelly says that no trains passed last night, and he thinks none will pass to-day. We cannot go to Coldwater, as we know only Mrs. Cox, and she is angry with me for leaving her. I would not let her know what has happened for the world, as she is a gossip, and would spread the story everywhere. The best course for us to pursue is to give notice that we shall leave at the end of the week. Blake is really sorry for us, and will prevent any one from molesting us until then; and when we get home, father and mother will know what to do, in case the story gets abroad. As soon as William comes, he shall take our trunks home, and we will follow on Saturday."

After further conversation, this plan was adopted; so when Blake came into the room, Mary told him that they were going home permanently on Saturday, as they could not stay in a place where they were subjected to such insults.

Blake expressed his regret at losing them, as they had always been so capable and trustworthy; but, under the circumstances, he could not blame them for leaving. He would guarantee that no one should ever learn the reason of their departure, outside of those engaged in the

“joke.” He had always admired the purity of their characters, and the thought, that he had been the means of sullying their reputations so irreparably, filled him with sincere sorrow. He could not sufficiently condemn his own conduct.

In this way, while apparently trying to lessen their fears, he was, in reality, working on their feelings in a most alarming manner. The only trouble which the girls anticipated, was the talk which would be made about them, if the story got abroad ; but Blake cunningly magnified the scandal which would result, while professing to be able to keep it quiet. By making it appear that their guilt would be universally believed, if the story should ever get out, he made them think that he, alone, could save them from infamy. In this, he fully succeeded, as he was aware of Alice's falsehood to Norah, and, by casually referring to it, he showed them that the best thing for them was to keep the whole affair perfectly quiet. He talked so kindly, and seemed to feel so sorry, as almost to win the girls' respect, and he induced Mary to promise never to tell his wife.

He had now gained the point for which the plot had been laid, and felt confident of success in the whole scheme of abduction. He had sufficiently compromised the girls to accomplish two objects, as he thought. Having taken the first steps in deception, the girls would be afraid to appeal to any one, except their own family, for aid, and he proposed to get them out of the reach of their friends, as quickly as possible. He then intended that Harris, Dick, and Joe should tell the story of having found him in bed with the girls, to blacken their charac-

ters, and make their abduction appear like a voluntary flight. The falsehood which Alice had told Norah would, also, play an important part, as corroborating the theory that Blake had actually seduced the girls, before their flight. This would probably prevent pursuit by the officers of the law, while the Wells family would not have the means to hunt for him. The time that would elapse before the affair would become known, and the delay created in the early investigation, would give him such a start as to make his capture impossible, even if the county authorities should conduct the search.

Like all criminals, he was expert in hiding his tracks; but he had forgotten one thing — that crime invariably carries its own punishment, and that there is no escape for the guilty.

CHAPTER VII.

DINNER was served at the usual hour, and Blake acted in the same kind, gentle manner as before. While the meal was in progress, Sloan entered the room, walked over to Alice, and put his arm around her neck. She sprang away from him in terror, while Blake rushed over to protect her, seemingly in a towering passion.

“Sloan, didn’t you do enough harm last night? Get out of this room!” he commanded, as if speaking to a dog.

Sloan turned upon him savagely, but, seeing that Blake was in earnest, he fairly cringed and said, as he crawled out of the room:

“I didn’t mean any harm. I’ll see you when you come out.”

Both the sisters felt the blow, but did not know what to do. They went immediately to their room, and Mary said:

“What is to prevent others from making the same kind of advances that Sloan has made? If William would only come, he would take us away at once; but there are no trains running, and there is no one to help us.”

They dropped on their knees and prayed for help, as only those can pray, who are driven to the verge of desperation.

Sloan and Blake had a meeting in the barn.

"You are acting wrong," said Blake. "I had just succeeded in calming down the girls, when you must come in and spoil everything, by taking liberties with Alice."

"Yes, d—n it, isn't she mine?" asked Sloan. "Haven't I a right to kiss her when I please?"

"Pshaw! you're a fool! Don't you understand that we shall have to use strategy? If you act properly, she will be yours bye-and-bye, but if you try to force things, you will find yourself in the penitentiary. I thought you had some common sense. She is young, she is courageous, and if you take liberties with her, the game is up. Many decent people come to my restaurant, and if they should hear her scream, they would burst in on you, and then where would you be? You fool! I wish I never had had anything to do with you. I see my mistake now."

"Well," said Sloan, in a conciliatory manner, "I will do just as you say, provided I am certain of having Alice."

"What do you want to talk about it for? You must keep quiet, or you will get them excited, and they have friends all around to whom they might go. I'll tell you what you must do. It will be a hard job, but it can't be helped. You must go to Bronson, get a double sleigh with plenty of buffalo robes, and come here by eleven o'clock to-night. I will have the girls drugged by that time, and we will carry them off at once." As he spoke, he drew a small phial of laudanum from his pocket.

Sloan touched the laudanum to his tongue and asked:

"Will that put them to sleep?"

"Yes," said Blake; "it is laudanum. We can keep them drugged with it for seven or eight hours, and even longer by renewing the dose."

An expression of brutal admiration came into Sloan's face, as he said :

"Blake, you're a bully fellow ! What a fool I have been to kick against you ! You're just the man for me !"

"All right ; now listen. I am going to carry them off to-night, so you must tell Harris to have a couple of bedrooms warm and comfortable for us on our arrival. Tell him to have Dick and Joe on hand to carry the girls into the house, as we shall be too numbed by the cold to do anything. Be sure to tell him to have the house quiet, with no outsiders around. Take this money, one hundred dollars, and give it to Harris to pay all expenses, including Dick and Joe."

"I'm your man," said Sloan, and he started off at a rapid pace for Bronson.

At supper, Blake acted in the same manner as at breakfast and dinner, taking pains not to say anything to hurt the feelings of the sisters. He was so kind and re-assuring in his conversation, that the girls began to have great confidence in him. He acted his devilish part well.

At nine o'clock, as the girls said good-night and started to go to bed, Blake said :

"Mary, you and Alice must be wholly exhausted from the terrible shock you received last night, and I am afraid you will be so nervous as to be unable to rest well. Let me give you each a glass of wine. It will quiet your nerves and make you sleep."

Mary, at first, declined, but Blake pressed it upon her so urgently, yet politely, that she, at length, consented. The girls were both very weak and faint, as they had not

felt like eating anything all day, and Mary thought that perhaps a glass of wine would do them good.

“I will set the wine outside the door of your room,” said Blake, “and you need not drink it until you are getting into bed.”

The girls then went to their room, and about ten o’clock, Blake came up with two glasses of wine. He set the waiter down on a chair close to the door, knocked, to let them know he had brought the wine, and went down stairs. When he had gone, Mary brought the wine into the room, and, with Alice’s assistance, barricaded the door as well as they were able. After saying their prayers, they each drank a glass of the wine and got into bed. They talked a few minutes and then dropped into a peaceful sleep. Care and fear faded out of their minds, and their only dreams were of home and parents. Finally, their sleep became heavier and deeper, until it was evident that the drugged wine had done its work.

CHAPTER VIII.

SLOAN arrived from Bronson shortly after eleven o'clock. He had a wide box-sleigh, provided with movable seats, and filled with hay and buffalo robes. Silently as cats, the two men stole up to the room of the sleeping girls. They easily pushed back the slight barricade against the door, and entered the chamber. Their light revealed to them the two sisters, sleeping in each other's arms. For a moment, even their hardened hearts were touched by the purity of the scene; but they forced back every good feeling, and proceeded with their damnable work. Lifting Alice out of bed, they hurriedly drew some of her clothing over her helpless form, wrapped her in a blanket, and laid her down. They then did the same with Mary. Both sisters were restless, in spite of the laudanum; and Mary, raising herself on one arm, muttered plaintively, as if dreaming:

“Mother! Oh! mother! Why don’t you help me!”

This powerful and touching appeal from her unconscious lips, had no effect, except to cause Blake to administer an additional dose of the drug to both girls.

“There,” said he, with an oath, “I guess that will quiet them.”

He then packed some of the girls’ clothing into a carpet-sack and put it into the sleigh. Sloan then lifted Alice in his arms, carried her down to the sleigh, and quickly

*Sloan then lifted Alice in his arms, carried her down to the sleigh, and quickly covered her up completely with
blankets and buffalo robes.—Page 184.*



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covered her up completely with blankets and buffalo robes, as he feared that the cold air might revive her. Blake followed with Mary, whom he placed beside Alice. He then seated himself by them to watch, while Sloan sprang to the front seat to drive. The horses were kept at the top of their speed, where the drifts would permit, and, in about two hours, they arrived at Harris' tavern.

As the panting horses dashed up, Dick and Joe came out and assisted Blake and Sloan to carry the unconscious girls to the rooms which had been prepared, and which were separated from each other only by folding doors. Alice was placed in one bed, and Mary in the other, while Blake and Sloan returned to the bar-room to get warm. When thoroughly warmed through, they instructed Harris not to disturb them in the morning, took a drink of brandy, and went to the rooms of the girls.

That night was consummated the crime which sent Blake and Mary to their graves — the guilty and the innocent. Blake had succeeded so far in his villainy, but, ere long, the avenger was to be upon his track.

It was nearly nine o'clock the next morning before Mary began to regain consciousness, and, for a time, she lay in a semi-stupor. Gradually, a dull, throbbing pain in her temples awakened her, and she opened her eyes. Everything was new and strange to her. She must be crazy, she thought, and she said aloud:

“Oh! mother, what is it?”

Then she stretched out her hand, as if to touch Alice beside her, but touched Blake, instead. Her eye followed her hand; and, on seeing Blake, a dazed comprehension of the truth flashed through her mind. She sprang from the

bed, hastily drew some of her clothes about her, and rushed to the door, which was locked. Blake also jumped from the bed, and approached her.

"Mary," said he, in a stern, commanding voice, "take care! Remember, that now you are mine! I will do anything for you, if you will only love me. I love you truly. I tried to banish your image from my heart, but could not. I then determined that you should be mine. To accomplish this end, I sent my wife to visit her mother; and then carried out the plan which has placed you in my power. You must yield to me, and love me, or *I will kill you.*"

"Kill me, kill me at once! You are a monster! I know I am ruined, but oh! let me go from here!" Mary answered.

As Blake approached to take hold of her, she shrieked, "Murder! murder!" with all the energy of despair. At the same moment, came a piercing shriek from the adjoining room.

Sloan was a coarser villain than Blake, and, as Alice, on awakening, sprang from his side, with a scream, he struck her a blow that knocked her down. He then lifted her up and put her into bed.

"There, d—n you," said he; "I'll teach you not to put on airs. You're mine, now, and you've got to obey me."

Alice neither moved nor spoke, and Sloan, seeing that she had swooned, became frightened. He rushed down to tell Harris, and the latter sent his wife up. Mrs. Harris was a hardened wretch, who, like many another fallen creature, gloated over the ruin of innocent girls. She was

capable of attempting any crime, which would bring in money.

I shall not try to describe the agony of those pure young sisters; it would be impossible for pen to give an adequate idea of their sufferings. Escape was impossible. They were in the hands of as inhuman monsters as ever drew breath; but there was no help for them, and they were forced to submit.

What a fate was theirs! Young, innocent, lovely, and entirely ignorant of the sin and misery of the world, they were dragged away from all that made life dear, and made to suffer cruelly, both mentally and physically. But their future trials were even worse than their present. They still had to pass through the most degrading of ordeals, from which Mary was to find escape only in death. What earthly punishment could be devised severe enough to punish justly the brutes who had debauched them?

Blake and Sloan went down stairs, leaving Dick and Joe to watch the girls, who were not allowed to leave their respective rooms. In the afternoon, Blake drove over to the restaurant, to get the girls' trunks and remaining clothes, which he brought to Bronson about dusk.

In the meantime, the girls had dressed themselves, but they had eaten nothing all day, and they began to be faint and weak. On his return, Blake went in to see Alice, and found her weeping.

"Won't you have some wine?" he asked.

"Oh! yes," said Sloan; "she will take anything I offer her. I have been teaching her to mind me without making a fuss about it."

Blake passed into Mary's room, and asked her if she

would take some wine. She was so weak and sick that she could not speak, so she merely nodded her head in assent. He then went down stairs, where he met Sloan.

"It is well they are dressed," said Blake. "We shall not have any bother with them when they start out. Take some wine and cake up to Alice, and I will take some to Mary. We must leave here by the evening train. I have sent word to my wife to come and take charge of the restaurant; telling her that Mary had gone home sick, and that Alice had gone to nurse her. We must strike for the West and keep out of danger. We have got the girls pretty well broken in, but we must watch them, for if they give us the slip, their brother will be after us in no time. We must keep them stupefied with the laudanum, and prevent any one from speaking to them, or seeing their faces. Hurry up! we have no time to lose."

Sloan went up to see Alice, and made her eat some food and drink some wine, while Blake took some wine and cakes to Mary, and left her alone. Mary knelt down before she ate, and prayed her Heavenly Father to deliver her from the power of her enemies.

When the evening train came along, Mary and Alice were sleeping quietly from the effects of a mild dose of laudanum, administered to them in their wine. The train stopped to take wood and water. Blake found one car almost empty, and in this car, the sisters were placed, being half carried in a drowsy stupor by Blake and Sloan. Both girls were heavily veiled and no one could have recognized them, even if any of their acquaintances had been on the train. Blake took a seat by Mary, and Sloan beside Alice, so as to keep control of them. The sisters

were so far under the influence of the drug, however, as to fall asleep as soon as they were seated; and, in this way Laporte was reached, without any suspicion having been awakened in the minds of any one. From Laporte, the party went by a connecting line to the Michigan Central Railroad, and thence to Chicago, where all trace of them was lost.

CHAPTER IX.

NEARLY a week elapsed before the girls' abduction was discovered. Kelly, the bar-keeper, said nothing in reference to the matter, and Mrs. Blake, on her return, three days later, supposed that Mary had gone home sick, as Blake had stated in his letter. Blake's absence was nothing unusual, as it was his habit to start off suddenly, to be gone, perhaps, for several weeks. William was too busy to go to Coldwater; and, although Mrs. Wells thought it strange that Mary did not write to her, she was not alarmed, supposing that the girls might be too much occupied to write.

When William went to Coldwater, however, and heard the story which Blake had written to Mrs. Blake, all was plain to him in an instant. His anguish was terrible, and he cursed himself for having advised his sisters to go to the restaurant to live. Mrs. Blake was equally affected. She loved her husband, brute as he was, and would not believe that he could have committed a crime. On the contrary, she accused Mary of leading him astray.

William did not know what to think nor do. He knew that his sisters were innocent, and that they must, therefore, have been carried away by force, but he could find no clue as to how or where they had gone. He returned home and gave his parents the sad intelligence that Mary and Alice had mysteriously disappeared. They were

frantic with grief, but could suggest no means of recovering the girls. William then went immediately to Coldwater and laid the case before the sheriff. The sheriff was a man of excellent feelings, and his heart was touched at William's story; he, also, fully believed that they had been abducted by force. He at once sent for his deputy, Mr. Green, to whom he gave charge of the case.

"Green," said he, "you must not waste a moment in getting on the trail of these villains and their victims. You must then leave nothing undone to bring them back to Coldwater—the girls to their parents and the scoundrels to jail. It will be a lasting disgrace to our county, if we do not bring the perpetrators of this vile crime to justice."

Green soon learned the particulars of the abduction, up to the time when Blake and Sloan took the girls away from Bronson. William, while at home, had obtained all the money that he could raise, and was ready to accompany Green on his search.

They, accordingly, proceeded west as far as Laporte, where they met the conductor of the train in which Blake had taken the party away from Bronson. The conductor described Blake and Sloan exactly, but could not describe the girls, as their faces had been closely veiled, and they had slept most of the time. He recollects that just before arriving at Laporte, he had seen the taller of the two girls trying to speak to some passengers, as they passed out of the car at Carlyle. The man sitting with her had pulled her down on the seat again, at the same time showing her a knife and apparently saying something harsh to her. The conductor had regarded it, at

the time, as merely a family quarrel, with which it would be better for him not to interfere. There had been nothing else, whatever, to arouse any suspicions with regard to the party, and, therefore, no idea of abduction had ever occurred to him.

The party was traced as far as Chicago, the accounts always being the same—that the girls had slept during the whole journey, except when changing cars, when they had seemed only half-awake.

Green and William arrived in Chicago and applied to Sheriff Church for his aid; but, though every effort was made, no trace of the villains could be found. All that could be discovered was that the party they were searching for, had arrived in Chicago, Saturday morning, but there all clue was lost. They were determined to continue the search, however, and Mr. Church, therefore, advised them to put the case in my hands.

It was nearly morning, by the time William had finished the story of the abduction, so far as he then knew it; and, having agreed to undertake the task of discovering the villains, I parted with my visitors and returned to bed.

This form of crime was new to me then, and I never before had heard such a truly painful case. My heart was deeply touched, as I thought of the helpless misery of those pure, young girls, and I lay awake for some time, thinking over the best course to pursue. I had intended to go to my home in Dundee the next day, but I determined not to give up the chase, until I had rescued the girls, and brought to punishment the brutes who had debauched them.

CHAPTER X.

AFTER sleeping a couple of hours, I started out, very early in the morning, on my work of detection. Mary's avenger was now upon Blake's track, never to be shaken off. I had obtained a full description of the whole party from William and Green, so that I felt confident of my ability to follow them up, the moment I should discover any trace of them.

After visiting the depot and several hotels near by, I walked into the American Hotel, on the corner of Lake street and Wabash avenue. Although I did not live in Chicago, I was well acquainted with the city, and knew Mr. Rossitter, the proprietor of the American Hotel, very well. Accordingly, I described Blake's party to Mr. Rossitter, and asked if any persons answering to their description had stopped at his hotel.

"Yes," he replied, "and I thought there was something strange about them. I did not like the appearance of the tall man. He looked like a gambler, and a desperate one at that. They gave their names as 'Brown and lady,' and 'Snell and lady.' They occupied adjoining rooms, opening into each other, and took their meals there, never once appearing in the dining-room. In fact, the ladies never left their rooms for any purpose, whatever, and looked dull and sleepy all the time. After they had gone, I learned from the chambermaids and waiting-

girls that there were a number of suspicious circumstances connected with them. The ladies were evidently afraid of the men, and one of the latter had a small phial which, the chambermaid thought, contained laudanum. The men drank heavily and always had a bottle of wine on the table."

"Do you know where they went?" I asked.

"They went west on the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad, but I don't know where they were bound."

"When did they leave?" I asked, but immediately answered my own question: "Oh! of course they stopped over Sunday and took the train Monday morning. Good-bye, Rossitter," and I hurried over to the sheriff's office.

"Church," I said, "I'm off. Detain young Wells and Deputy-Sheriff Green until you hear from me. It is now Friday; you will probably get a dispatch from me by Monday or Tuesday. Keep them easy, and say that I am on the trail of the scoundrels."

So saying, I went out and hastened to the Galena depot, being just in time for the morning train going west. The conductor, Mr. Wiggins, was an old acquaintance, so I entered into conversation with him, in the course of which, I asked him, casually, whether he had had charge of the train Monday morning, ten days before. He replied that "Deacon" Harvey had taken the train out that morning, the two conductors going out alternately morning and evening.

As I lived on the line of the road, I knew all the conductors, and hoped to get some information from Harvey, if we did not pass him between stations.

I then stretched myself comfortably in my seat, and

began to ponder upon the probabilities as to Blake's course. I knew that he was the moving spirit in the whole affair, and that all my calculations must be made upon his probable action. If he were going to California, he was taking a very circuitous route, since it was necessary to go much further south, if he intended to strike across the plains. Still, he might intend waiting somewhere in the interior of Illinois until spring, and then he could go down the Mississippi to St. Louis, or any other point that he might choose. It was not at all likely that he would go into an unsettled country to stay; he was too fond of company and gambling to do that. It was most probable that he would stop in some large town until spring, and then go to St. Louis, thence up the Missouri river to Independence, and from there start across the plains for California.

"Yes," I soliloquized, inaudibly, "there is something probable in that. They will most likely hide in Illinois, but will they stay together? Sloan is a stage-driver, and is well acquainted on all the stage routes; hence, he will be of service in getting passes and reduced rates of fare on the stage lines. He will probably wish to remain east of the Mississippi, and Blake will not go far away. Well, I shall have to feel as I go along, trusting to getting some clue in Belvidere."

The Galena and Chicago Union Railroad, (now absorbed in the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad,) was the first railroad commenced in Illinois, and the only one running west of Chicago. It had been completed only to Belvidere, in Boone county, from which point travelers and immigrants were carried west and north in stages,

many of which were in waiting, on the arrival of each train.

At Marengo, John Perkins, the agent of Frink & Walker, got aboard the train to sell tickets to persons wishing to leave Belvidere by any of the numerous stage-lines, all of which were owned by the above-named firm. John was a fine young fellow, who had been promoted to his present place from that of stage-driver. He was a genial, shrewd man, who tried to be on good terms with every one, and generally succeeded. He and I were well acquainted with each other, and I determined to draw him out quietly, as he was just the man to have observed Blake's party, if he had met any of them.

It is my practice never to tell any one what object I have in view, unless it is absolutely necessary that I should do so. Therefore, I did not tell John what the business was which took me to Belvidere. He joined me after he had been through the whole train, and we had a pleasant conversation. At length, I introduced the subject of stage management, upon which John was never tired of talking.

"How many different stage routes start from Belvidere?" I asked, after a few remarks had passed.

"Oh! several," said John, and he went on to tell how many stages there were on each route, the number of times the horses were changed, the average number of passengers, and many other details.

"Do you employ many men to handle baggage?" I asked.

"Yes; we have six men in Belvidere alone, and they have all they can attend to."

"What a number of drivers you must have, John!" I said, carelessly. "How do you ever manage to keep track of them all?"

"That's an easy matter," said he, pulling a memorandum book from his pocket. "This contains an alphabetical list of the names of all the drivers in my division."

"You stage men have brought things down to a wonderful system," said I, as I took the book and casually glanced through it.

I saw that E. Sloan was a driver on the route from Janesville to Madison, and I continued to turn the leaves as I said :

"Oh! so Sloan is driving for you, eh! I used to know him some time ago. He was driving for the Humphries, in Michigan, then, I believe."

"Yes," replied John, "he came to us from them."

"He's a good driver, isn't he?"

"Yes," said John, "very good, indeed."

"Where is he now?" I asked, as I saw that John did not suspect me of having any particular object in my inquiries.

"He and his wife came west about a week ago and went on to Rockford. I gave him a pass to Janesville and told him he could have his old route, but I don't know whether he will take it, as he said he could not decide what he should do for a week or two. He said he might like a southern route."

"I am glad to hear he's doing so well," I replied. "He is an old friend of mine, and I should like to see him."

"You will most likely find him in Rockford; but if he has left there, you can easily find where he has gone."

"So, he has taken a wife, eh?" I said, half musingly. "I wonder whom he married. Did he have any friends with him?"

"Yes; a man and his wife were with him," said John. "I did not like the looks of the man very much; from the 'cut of his jib,' as the sailors say, I took him to be a gambler, and one of the sort who always win."

"Gambling is carried on everywhere just now," I said. "You can find any number of gamblers at Galena, or Rockford. In fact, every little place seems to have its gambling hell. Do you remember his friend's name? I wonder if I know him."

"I have his name here," said John. "I gave him a pass, too."

As he spoke, he drew out a note-book and showed me the entry:

"Blake and lady — Belvidere to Rockford, with pass."

"So, that's the way you do things, is it?" I asked.

"Yes; we are not very particular now. Old Frink tells us to be liberal with the good drivers, and grant them small favors. Good drivers are hard to find, and while business is so brisk, we need all we can get. Hence, we lose nothing by treating them well."

Now, I was close on their track. Blake got a pass to Rockford, and Sloan, to Janesville. It seemed strange that such men did not know enough to get off the beaten routes of travel, and endeavor to hide more effectually. I concluded that they had little fear of detection, and still less of pursuit, and, therefore, proposed to take things easily. I did not imagine for an instant the extent of

Blake's villainy, nor his real reason for frequenting the large towns.

On arriving in Belvidere, I went to the American House, as I was well acquainted with the proprietor, Mr. Irish; from him I soon learned that Blake's party had stopped there one day.

"Blake is a pretty good fellow, isn't he, Mr. Irish?" I asked.

"Yes; he seems to be a good fellow. He knows how to play cards; he never lost a game, while here."

"Well, it would be hard to find a man in Belvidere who could get away with him at cards," said I. "Did his wife come down into the parlor and associate with the other ladies?"

"No, indeed. But I must hurry away, as the stages are soon going out. Are you going west?"

"No," I replied; "I may take a buggy and drive out a few miles, but I am not sure what I shall do. Oh! one more question before you go. Did Blake make much money here?"

"I guess he did; and that reminds me—I think King went up to Mrs. Blake's room while Blake was playing," said Irish.

As he spoke, he gave a knowing laugh, and poked me with his finger in the ribs.

"Is it possible!" said I. "How long did he stay?"

"About an hour. You know, King has plenty of money, and I presume he treated the lady liberally. When he came down, he went into the room where Blake was gambling, and ordered drinks for the crowd."

"After King went away, did any one else go to Mrs. Blake's room?" I asked.

"I think not," replied Irish. "It was after eleven o'clock before King came down, and Blake went to bed by midnight. Blake is a good fellow, and I would like to have him for a regular boarder, as he is generous with his cash."

"Well," said I, as Irish moved off, "I believe I'll change my mind, and go on to Galena by the next stage. I shall spend the night at Pecatonica; if there is anything I can do for you, let me know."

What a terrible revelation had been made to me in this short conversation! I knew King well as an infamous libertine. What was the business that kept him in Mary's room for over an hour? I had to shudder at the only answer that could be given. From all I could learn, the girls were kept constantly in a comatose state, which, together with the terror with which Blake and Sloan had inspired them, had prevented them from attempting to escape, or asking assistance. Mary, undoubtedly, had been made wholly insensible, before King was admitted to her room. He was a rich, but unscrupulous brute, fit for any crime, and the more revolting to nature it was, the more he would delight in it.

This terrible discovery filled me with horror, and I determined to lose not a moment in freeing the sisters from their brutal captors.

CHAPTER XI.

FIVE stages were on the point of starting for Rockford, and I took a seat beside the driver of one of them. The night was dark, and the road was none of the best, so that we seemed to creep along at a snail's pace. I was impatient to grasp the villains, and rescue the sisters from their terrible position.

The driver of the stage was a pleasant, genial fellow; in conversation with him, I found that he knew Sloan, but that he had not seen him for a day or two. I was rather disconcerted at this news, as I had hoped to find the whole party in Rockford. It was about half-past eight o'clock when we entered Rockford, and drove up before the Washington House, where the stages usually stopped.

I did not know how I should be received here. Only six months before, I had obtained the necessary evidence to convict some counterfeiters, who had a haunt in Winnebago County. With the assistance of the United States Marshal, I had arrested them and taken them to Chicago. I believed at the time that the landlord of the Washington House was, in some way, in the interest of the gang; hence, I was rather suspicious of him. I determined not to trust him at all, but to take a room, and make my investigations quietly.

Accordingly, I sauntered up to the register, entered my name, and glanced over the list of the arrivals for a few

days back. I found that Blake and lady had been given room number five; and Sloan and lady, room number nine. I then ate supper and loitered around the barn, until I met the hostler. I asked him whether he knew Sloan. He said yes; but that he had not seen him for a day or two. Finding that nothing could be done that night, I went to bed, pretty well tired out.

Early the next morning (Saturday), I met the landlord; and, as I shook hands with him, I said, quietly:

“Don’t talk with me, nor let any one know who I am. I want to get some more evidence against those counterfeiters, and don’t wish any one to know me. I may be here for two or three days; so, please keep mum for the present.”

“All right,” said he, and after taking a drink with me, he moved off.

I placed more confidence in the clerk than in the landlord, but I thought best to tell him the same story. I then lounged about the hall, and saw every one who came to breakfast; but none of the parties I was seeking made their appearance.

About ten o’clock, I went over to the stage barn, to see what information might be learned about Sloan. After a time, I made the acquaintance of the driver who had taken Sloan and Alice to Janesville. By treating him to whisky and cigars, I succeeded in making him talkative and friendly; then, I ventured to ask after Sloan.

“Oh! Sloan went up to Janesville with me Thursday week,” said the driver. “He had a mighty fine girl with him, and she will make him a splendid wife; but, after all, he is a very shiftless fellow, and it is a pity to see such

a nice girl throw herself away on him. To my mind, she is sick of her bargain, already. Why, she never spoke to him during the whole trip."

"So, you took them to Janesville, did you?"

"Yes; that's my run. I saw Sloan yesterday, and shall see him the next time I go up. Who shall I say was asking for him?"

I pretended not to hear his question; since, if I should give my real name, Sloan would immediately take the alarm; and, if I gave a fictitious name, it would almost certainly be strange to Sloan, and his suspicions might be excited. I, therefore, tided over the difficulty by asking the driver to take another drink; and, as the dinner hour had arrived, I bade him good-day and walked away.

I ate dinner very slowly and kept my seat until all the other boarders had finished. I carefully scrutinized the features of every one, but saw no one that would correspond to the description of Blake, or Mary.

My reticence and my strict rule against letting any one know my business, made my search slower and more difficult—but, at the same time, more certain—than as if I had taken the landlord or clerk into my confidence. But I was determined not to risk even the possibility of giving Blake the alarm; so, I worked entirely unassisted.

I knew where there was a gambling saloon on the east side of the river, and I decided to pay it a visit. I, accordingly, walked to it, entered the bar-room, and sat down, ordering a glass of whisky and a cigar. There was a crowd in the bar-room, but I sat quietly smoking and listening to the talk around me. The afternoon slipped away without any new developments; and, as it

began to grow dark, the crowd gradually thinned out, until I was almost alone.

Finally my patience was rewarded. Shortly after five o'clock, four men came down from the gambling rooms which, I knew, were up stairs. I immediately picked out one of them as Blake. He answered the description perfectly. His fine appearance and showy jewelry were unmistakable, and I knew that the man I was seeking, was before me. He was a representative specimen of the professional gambler. His companions were not professionals, but wealthy men who gambled for amusement. They called for drinks at the bar, and then two of them went out, leaving Blake and the remaining member of the party sipping their liquor, with their backs turned toward me. By this time, I was sitting back, apparently sound asleep; and, though I was quite near them, they took no notice of me, so that I was able to overhear their remarks.

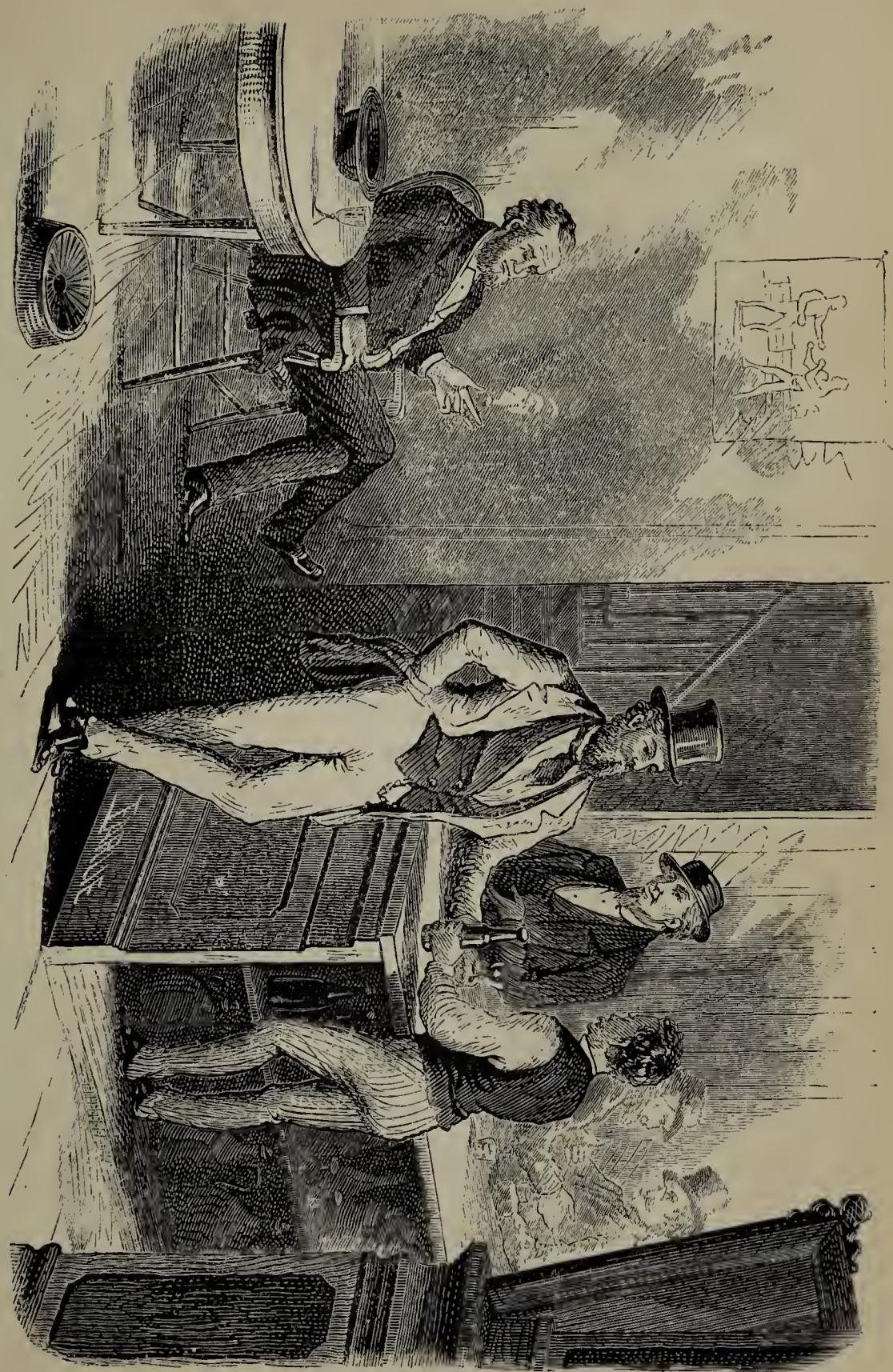
"Call at ten o'clock," said Blake, "and I will have all arranged. She will be asleep by that time."

Good Heavens! could I have heard aright! Blake was deliberately planning to give his pure and innocent victim into the power of another lustful brute!

"By the Eternal! I will end it now!" I muttered, as I started to my feet. But the folly of my course flashed across me instantly, and I sat down again, fortunately unobserved by them. It would not do to act in my then excited state.

"Ten o'clock?" said Blake's companion. "All right; I will be there without fail."

Shortly after five o'clock, four men came down from the gambling rooms which, I knew, were up-stairs. I immediately picked out one of them as Blake.—Page 204.



"The door will be locked; but you knock, and I will let you in," said Blake, as his friend went out.*

Blake conversed a few minutes with the bar-keeper, paid for the drinks, and walked out. I allowed him to go some distance ahead of me, and then kept him in sight. He walked to the Washington House and entered the hall door. I quickened my pace and ran up the steps only a moment behind him. I hurried into the bar-room, but he was not there. I then went up stairs and found number five, which was a suite of rooms, with two doors opening into the hall. Before I could get out of the way, Blake opened his door and looked out. I was obliged to walk into a room, the door of which was fortunately unlocked, and pretend that it was my room. I waited there until all was quiet, and then slipped out, noiselessly. It was now nearly six o'clock, and I went to my own room to reflect upon what course to pursue.

At this moment, I recollect that I had no warrant upon which to arrest Blake. I had a justice's warrant, issued in Coldwater, Michigan, for the arrest of Blake

* By a peculiar coincidence, just at the time that this agreement was made, the nephew of Sheriff Church entered the latter's office in Chicago and said that he had just come in from Rockford. In the course of the conversation, he told Sheriff Church that there was a gambler in Rockford, who was cleaning out all the other gamblers there. He added: "The money that the man doesn't win, in one way, his wife obtains, in another. She is said to be a beautiful woman; but it takes one hundred dollars to make her acquaintance."

Of course, Church did not think of Mary in this connection, as the possibility that the girls might have been separated did not occur to him.

and Sloan; but this paper was useless in Illinois. Nevertheless, I had heard the bargain made to let a brute into Mary's room that night, and I determined that that crime should never be permitted. I would arrest Blake or die in the attempt.

I confess that I had never been so excited before. I had been deeply affected by William's story; I had heard of Mary's sale to King in Belvidere; and, now that the incarnate fiend was about to give her over to another man, I was ready to take the law in my own hands, if necessary, to prevent the outrage.

I had no one to assist me in making the arrest. It is true, I had many friends in Rockford; but they all lived across the river, and I had not been in West Rockford during the day. I decided to arrest Blake at once, however, relying on the justice of my case. After supper, therefore, I wrote a note to the sheriff, with whom I was slightly acquainted, asking him to come immediately to the Washington House, on very important business. I sent the note by a safe messenger and then went to my room to get my pistols. I put one in each pocket of my pantaloons and went down stairs, taking a position in front of the hotel. I was now perfectly cool, and was only awaiting the arrival of the sheriff, to assist me in arresting Blake.

CHAPTER XII.

THE minutes slipped rapidly away, and by half-past eight o'clock, I began to get excited again. Time was precious; Blake's appointment had been made for ten o'clock; but the man might come earlier. I had no over-coat on; so, I went into the hotel, to wait for the sheriff. In a few minutes, I resolved to take some decisive action soon.

I walked upstairs and opened the door of number five. Blake stood in the middle of the room, beside a table, and was engaged in pouring some liquid from a bottle into a tumbler. He had evidently just finished writing a letter, as one lay on the table unsealed. A lady sat in the shadow near the window. As soon as Blake saw me, he walked towards me.

"Oh! I beg pardon," I said; "I was looking for number seventeen."

"It is not here," he said, in a hoarse voice.

"Please excuse me," I added, as I backed out of the room and closed the door.

In a second, I heard him bolt it.

"That is bad," thought I; "but I know they are there, and that Blake's friend has not arrived."

I had just obtained a glimpse of Mary. She looked very haggard, and was terribly changed, as compared with the rosy, beautiful girl who had been described to me.

I then walked down to the street, but could see no signs of the sheriff. I walked as far as the bridge, but could not see him coming.

"I will end the matter now," I muttered; "or he will end me, one of the two. I must have the girl out of danger before ten o'clock."

It was then half-past nine. The landlord was behind his desk, as I entered the office, and I called him to one side.

"I'll tell you what I am here for," I said. "I have some business with Mr. Blake, in number five. You may possibly hear some noise, but don't mind it. If I break anything, I will pay for it. I have sent for the sheriff, and I expect him every minute. When he comes, send him up to the room; but let no one else come up, until I call."

"All right, Pink," said he; "I know you will do only what is right."

I had a light coat on, and was unencumbered with anything which could place me at a disadvantage in a struggle; so I walked straight up to number five.

I gave a light knock. Blake evidently thought his friend had come, for I heard him moving across the room. The thought flashed into my mind:

"Perhaps Mary is already drugged! I hope not."

Blake opened the door. In a second, I pushed into the room, locked the door, and dropped the key into my pocket. I then pointed my pistol at his head.

"You are my prisoner!" I said, in a stern voice.

The betrayer and the avenger were, now, face to face.

He started back, with an amazed look, and made a quick motion towards his pocket, as if to draw a weapon.

“Raise your hands over your head, and go to the other side of the room,” I commanded. “I will kill you if you attempt to draw your pistol.”

He did not move.

“Will you go back?” I asked, in a determined tone. “If you don’t go this instant, you’re a dead man. I know you are armed. Go back!”

He went. From that moment, I knew he was a coward. I had awed him by my commanding tone and resolute look.

As he moved back, Mary rushed toward me.

“Oh! save me! save me!” she exclaimed. “May Heaven protect you! Oh! where is my father! where is my mother!”

As she spoke, she fainted away at my feet; but I could not attend to her then.

“Let me come to her, I will revive her,” said Blake; and he dropped his hands by his side.

“Throw your hands over your head and keep them there,” I again commanded; he quickly obeyed.

At this instant, I recollect that I had brought no hand-cuffs with me. They are almost indispensable in my business; yet I had forgotten them.

“Blake,” I said, “keep your right hand over your head, take out your pistol with your left hand, and lay it on the table. If you make a single suspicious move, I shall kill you. I am a sure shot, and, on the least provocation, a ball will go crashing through your brain.”

“Who are you who dare talk to me in this way?” he

asked. "This is my room ; that lady is my wife ; what business have you in here ? "

"Pshaw ! that lady your wife ? That lady is Mary Wells, whom you have abducted, you scoundrel. Lay down your pistol, or take the consequences. One hand only ; keep the other over your head," I continued, as he began to lower both hands.

He then slipped his revolver out of his pocket and laid it on the table.

"Back again, now," I said ; and he obeyed. I stepped to the table and put his pistol into my pocket.

"You see that I have the advantage of you," I went on ; "I have three pistols while you have none."

Then, glancing at Mary, who was just recovering consciousness, I said :

"Raise yourself, Miss Wells ; I cannot help you, as I must look out for Blake."

She raised herself and moved toward me.

"Don't touch me, now," I said ; "I don't want to give Blake a chance of escape. I will talk to you bye-and-bye."

Mary staggered back and fell into a chair, as a low knock was heard at the door.

"Who is there ? " I asked ; but there was no answer. "Who is there ? " I repeated, thinking it might be the sheriff.

A fiendish expression of delight came into Blake's face, and then, the thought flashed into my mind that it was Blake's friend, who had been told to call at ten o'clock.

"Blake," I said, "that is your friend, to whom you agreed to deliver Mary at ten o'clock. He can come in,

if he likes, as I have pistols enough for both of you. You are a beast, not a man."

"How the h—l did you know a man was to have been here at ten o'clock?" he asked, in a surly, but surprised tone.

"Because I heard you make the bargain with him. Mary was to have been asleep."

"How long are you going to keep me with my hands over my head?" he asked.

"Until the sheriff comes to take you to jail; then, Mary, I will be ready to talk to you."

"I may as well give up," he muttered. "Your d—d pistol settled me. If I had got mine out first, it would have been very different; but I admit it was a fair game, and I am caught. I know that I have wronged Mary; that I have ruined her; but I could not help it."

Mary attempted to speak.

"No, Miss Wells," I said; "don't talk now."

Blake continued:

"I will do all in my power to atone for my crime. I have done wrong, indeed. This will kill my wife. I may as well go to jail quietly."

I had given up all hope of the sheriff's arrival; I therefore, decided that I had better take Blake to jail myself. It was my intention, then, to come back, to get all the information possible from Mary. I further expected to start for Janesville early the next morning, to rescue Alice and capture Sloan.

I glanced hastily at Mary. Her appearance was pitiable in the extreme; her face was perfectly livid, and she seemed absolutely helpless.

"Blake," I said, "if I thought I could trust you to go quietly, I would take you over to the jail, myself."

"You have the advantage," said he, "and, of course, you will keep it. I shall make no resistance."

"I'll do it," said I; "but mind! Just as surely as you attempt to escape, I will shoot you down, like a dog. I shall have no mercy on you; and if you attempt any treachery, you will be a dead man the next instant; be assured of that."

"I will go peaceably," he said, "there is no use in trying to resist; moreover, I want to keep the affair quiet for the sake of my wife and the girls."

"Get your hat and come along, then."

"Will you allow me to get an overcoat?" he asked.

"Yes," I said, as I knew the more clothing he had on, the more powerless he would be.

On that account, I always have made it a practice to go without an overcoat, and have hardened myself to stand a great deal of cold without suffering.

I stood with my back against the door, while Blake went into the adjoining room to get his overcoat. Mary said, in a quick, excited manner:

"He will make his escape from that room, and he has a knife in his pocket."

I sprang to the door connecting the two rooms, and said:

"Come in here! What knife was that you put in your pocket?"

"It is a lie," he replied; "I did not put a knife in my pocket."

"Lay your coat down on the table," I said.



"Hand me the knife," I said, firmly, "or I will spatter the room with yone brains."—Page 213.

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He did not obey, but looked as if he would like to rebel.

“Blake, lay your coat down and raise your hands above your head.”

He saw, by my eye, that I was not to be trifled with, and he obeyed. I examined the coat, but found no knife.

“Blake, what have you done with your knife?” I asked.

“She is a liar; I have no knife,” he answered.

Mary raised her head, and said:

“Yes, he has; it is concealed in the pocket of his pants. He means to kill either you or me with it.”

“Hand me that knife,” I said, firmly, “or I will spatter the room with your brains.”

With a sullen oath, he drew a fine bowie-knife from his pocket, and pitched it toward me.

“Have a care, Blake,” said I. “You should not throw a knife in that way. I know you wouldn’t hurt me for the world, but I advise you to be more polite in future.”

I picked up the knife and handed it to Mary.

“Keep that until I come back,” I said. “I shall return in three-quarters of an hour, and you had better keep the door locked, while I am gone.”

The man whom Blake had agreed to let in, had been gone for some time. I, therefore, apprehended no attempt at a rescue, unless Blake should get help in passing some of the saloons. Many of these drinking holes were still open, it being Saturday night, and only a little after ten o’clock. Still I did not fear any such attempt. Blake then put on his overcoat; I grasped him by the right arm with my left hand, and held my revolver in my right hand, ready to give him the contents, if he attempted to

escape. He was a muscular, powerful man, and I did not propose to give him a chance to grapple with me.

We met no one on the stairs, as we went down, but I saw about a dozen persons in the bar-room. The hotel was raised three or four steps above the sidewalk, and, as we passed out of the hall door, Blake went down the steps so quickly as to make me jump the whole distance, in order to keep hold of him.

"If you make another attempt to escape," I said, "you must take the consequences."

"I wasn't trying to escape," he replied; "I don't wish to be seen by any of the boarders."

A short distance down the street, we passed two men, and I heard one of them say:

"The river is rising rapidly, and it will sweep away the bridge before morning."

"Good God!" I thought, "what shall I do, if I can't cross the bridge!"

In a few moments, we came in sight of the bridge; I then saw that two of the spans had already been washed away, and that communication was kept up by a single plank, thrown across from pier to pier. I, afterwards, learned that the two spans had been washed away about two weeks before. This night, however, there was danger that even the foot-planks might be carried off.



While I was in the act of speaking, Blake swung himself quickly around, facing me, and struck me a tremendous blow between the eyes.—Page 215.

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CHAPTER XIII.

AS we neared the river I said :
“Blake, we cannot cross.”

While I was in the act of speaking, Blake swung himself quickly around, facing me, and struck me a tremendous blow between the eyes. I should have fallen, had I not seized the lapel of his coat. Although it tore off, as he darted away, I kept my footing by means of the pull ; but, for a second, I could see nothing but fire. Then the shock passed off, and I saw Blake rushing swiftly up the street. I dashed after him, instantly, leaving my hat behind, and shouted :

“Stop thief! stop thief !”

The crowds in the saloons began to pour out, and all was excitement. I was a swift runner, and felt sure of catching my man. He ran due east for a time, and then, turning north, passed through a street lined with trees. He had a good start of me, and was rapidly nearing the woods on the edge of the town. I had a clear view of him, as he ran, so I raised my pistol and shouted :

“Stop ! or you are a dead man !”

He did not answer, but kept on running ; so, I took a hurried aim and fired.

“Confound it ! have I lost that shot !” I muttered. I again sighted at him and fired, as I continued the chase.

Some one at my side said :

"For God's sake! Pinkerton, stop firing! Don't you see that you have killed me?"

Just as Blake said this, he staggered and fell down, close by the fence. I found that my first shot had taken effect; the second, I found in the trunk of a tree, next morning.

"Get up!" I said to Blake, in a harsh tone; "I told you I would shoot you, if you tried to escape, and now I have done it."

He tried to rise, but could not. By this time, the crowd from the saloons had come up. Some one said:

"Blake, who shot you?"

Seeing that there were many of Blake's old chums in the crowd, some of whom were dangerous-looking characters, I raised Blake up and said:

"He is my prisoner."

At this, the crowd fell back; but, at my request, four of them raised him up and conveyed him to a small tavern, near by, where he was laid on a lounge. He was then insensible, and medical aid was at once called. I remained with him to hear the surgeon's report; and, once, Blake opened his eyes and muttered:

"Pinkerton, I will kill you yet!" to which I made no reply.

In a few minutes, two doctors arrived and probed Blake's wound. It was on the right side of the spine, near the small of the back, and they immediately said that he could not live more than a day or two. By this time, a great crowd had gathered around the tavern door; and, as I passed out, several voices cried out:

"There goes the murderer!"

“Send for the sheriff,” I replied; “I will answer to the proper authorities.”

I then went back into the tavern and wrote a note to Mr. Holland, a lawyer, asking him to meet me at the Washington House, as soon as possible. Having sent this note, I started for the hotel. The streets were filled with people, all in a state of great excitement, and my situation was neither pleasant nor safe.

On reaching the hotel, I went up to see Mary. I knocked at the door, and she immediately let me in. She was crying quietly, and was, evidently, very weak.

“Mary,” I asked, “what is in that phial?” and I pointed to the one I had seen in Blake’s hand.

“I don’t know,” she replied. “Blake always poured a few drops out of it into our wine, when he wished to make us sleep.”

“Mary,” I said, “you must not get excited at what I am going to tell you. *Blake is shot.* I had to shoot him to prevent his escape. I had no alternative, as he would have got into the woods.”

She said nothing, but continued to weep, even more bitterly than before. The thought flashed across me: “Can it be possible that she cared for this handsome scoundrel?” and I said :

“You do not feel angry with me, because I have done this, do you?”

“Oh! no sir; it is not anger that makes me weep; but oh! how horrible it is, to think of him being ushered into eternity with all his sins unrepented of! I have not words to express my gratitude to you for your kindness in rescuing me, and I hope no harm will come to you.”

At this moment, the sheriff and several citizens entered the room. I took the sheriff into an adjoining room, closed the door, and told him all that had happened. I then asked him to go over to the tavern and secure the papers on Blake's person; I felt sure that some evidence of his guilt would be found on him. I, also, called Mary into the room and asked her whether she knew where Alice was.

"No, sir; Sloan took her away last Thursday week; but I don't know where they went. Blake was writing a letter to Sloan, this evening, and I think he has it in his pocket, now."

"I know where Alice is," I said; "Sloan took her to Janesville. Sheriff, you would oblige me very much, by getting Blake's papers. You need not fear that I shall run away."

Mr. Holland, my lawyer, came in, at this moment, and I explained my case to him. He shook me warmly by the hand and said:

"It will give me great pleasure to defend you. I, not only, sympathize with you heartily, but wholly approve your course. You will have more friends in Rockford than ever before."

Mr. Holland and the sheriff then went over to obtain Blake's papers. They found the streets crowded with people, as the shooting had been plainly heard, and every one was anxious to learn the cause of the trouble. During the sheriff's absence, I advised the people who had crowded into the hotel, to go away quietly; and they, finally, did so. I induced Mary to lie down to get some sleep, and the landlord, at my request, sent a girl to stay with her.

I was just about to retire, when a gentleman asked to see me. He proved to be the pastor of the Methodist church in Rockford; he stated that, having heard, briefly, from the sheriff, the story of Mary's wrongs, he had come to offer to take her to his own home, until her family should arrive, to take care of her. The hotel was so noisy, and the excitement was so bad for Mary, that I thankfully accepted his kind offer. I, therefore, procured a carriage, and Mary was, at once, conveyed to the minister's house.

Meanwhile, the sheriff had searched Blake's clothing, and the following letter was found :

“ FRIEND SLOAN : I am just coining money. Mary has several admirers, and I often have two gentlemen up to see her of a night. She is getting d—d pale, but all the gentlemen pronounce her a regular beauty.

“ I have my eye on two stunning girls in West Rockford; and we will get them to go out on the plains with us, when we take Mary and Alice to the ‘diggins.’ If they won’t come willingly, *we know how to make them.*

“ Are you doing well with Alice? I am making more money out of this speculation than out of any I ever attempted before.

“ Yours, etc.,

BLAKE.”

The sheriff brought this letter to me, and went off without locking me up; although I advised him to arrest me, as a matter of form.

“ After reading that letter,” said he, “ there is no power on earth that could make me arrest you.”

CHAPTER XIV.

IT was nearly four o'clock before I went to bed, but by six, I was up. I, at once, sent the following dispatch to Sheriff Church :

“SHERIFF W. L. CHURCH, Chicago:

“I arrested Blake last night. He broke away from me and ran for the woods. After a sharp race, I fired two shots at him. The first ball entered his back and passed through his body. The doctors pronounce the wound fatal. A letter to Sloan, found on his person, stated that he had two Rockford girls under his eye, whom he intended to debauch and take to California. Send William and Deputy-Sheriff Green by first train. Sloan and Alice are at Janesville. Will leave for Belvidere as soon as possible. I want Alice here. Fear Mary will be sick. She asks all the time for her father and William.

“ALLAN PINKERTON.”

Having sent the dispatch, I ate breakfast, and then, paid a visit to all the clergymen on both sides of the river. I narrated the particulars of the outrage that had been perpetrated on the girls; spoke of their innocence and beauty, and of the hellish means used to destroy them; called attention to the letter found on Blake's person, in which he spoke of an intention to debauch two Rockford girls; and, in fact, laid bare the whole vile scheme, which had been successfully carried out, in part.

The clergymen, unanimously, approved of my course. In their morning discourses, they gave their congregations a short sketch of Blake's wicked plots, and offered devout thanks that he had been stopped in his career of crime, before he had had the opportunity to carry out his designs on the two Rockford girls. Prayer was offered up for Mary and Alice; also, for Mr. and Mrs. Wells, that they might be given strength to bear up under their terrible affliction. In this way, Mary's sad story was conveyed to all the church-going people in Rockford, and many ladies called that day at the Methodist parsonage, to offer their services.

During the forenoon, I called to see Mary, and found that she was quite delirious. At times, Blake would appear to her; the fearful events of the first stormy night would float before her; and she would shudder and almost faint with agony. Again, she thought she was on the cars, making the forced trip, and she suddenly startled every one by a piercing cry for Alice. Then she was at home, with her father, mother, and William, and her pleasant smiles showed that all was peace, purity, and happiness.

A physician stayed with her all the time; as I left, he went to the door with me and said that she had no appetite, and was running down fast. He wished that her sister would come, as Alice would have more influence over her, than strangers, although the Rockford ladies were doing everything in their power. She had youth and a good constitution on her side, however, and might pull through.

I returned to the Washington House, and as I passed

some of the groggeries, the loafers, congregated in front of them, jeered at me, and called me a murderer. One bloated sot swaggered up to me and said :

"So, you are the murderer, are you? D—n you, I will put a ball through you!"

I turned on him and calmly said :

"I don't know you, nor do I wish to; but if you give me cause, I will shoot you, too. I will show the people of Rockford what kind of a man you are," and I advanced toward him.

He was, evidently, a cowardly braggart, for he slunk away into the crowd, and said no more.

Sunday was a busy day with me, as people came in to see me every minute. All the respectable people of the community were anxious to express to me their approval of my actions.

At seven o'clock in the evening, a carriage drove up, and, to my astonishment, William and Deputy-Sheriff Green jumped out. Immediately on receipt of my dispatch, in Chicago, they had obtained a special train, which had brought them to Belvidere; there, they had hired a carriage, in which they had come to Rockford.

I was delighted to see them, and, after a hasty supper, I took William to see Mary. I impressed upon him the necessity of being perfectly calm, and then led him into her room. Mary was propped up with pillows in a half-reclining position, and was very weak. William's color rose and his eyes flashed, as he saw what a wreck Mary had become; but, in a second, tears filled his eyes, and he almost fell, as he walked carefully across the room, and knelt at the bedside.

“Mary, don’t you know me?” he said, in a voice trembling with emotion. “Don’t you know William?”

As the familiar tones reached her ear, a look of delight came into her face; she raised herself on her arm, gazed lovingly at William, and tried to speak; but her emotions overcame her, and she dropped back in a swoon. The Doctor, assisted by two ladies who were present, soon revived her, and she was able to speak in a faint voice.

“Oh! William, I am so delighted to see you! Where are father, mother, and Alice? Won’t they come to me?”

William took her hand gently, and endeavored in vain, to suppress the sobs that *would* come in spite of himself. His chest heaved convulsively, and his eyes were full of tears. Finally, he mastered his grief with great effort, and said :

“Father is coming as soon as he can. You will meet him in Chicago, if you are strong enough to make the journey.”

I will not dwell upon this affecting meeting. Sorrow is the heritage of the whole world, and we all have so much unhappiness in our own lives, that we, naturally, do not desire to contemplate the misery of others, too long.

CHAPTER XV.

I LEFT William with Mary, and returned to the Washington House, to see Deputy-Sheriff Green. Having told him that Sloan was in Janesville, I offered to go there to arrest the villain and get Alice. Mary needed her sister's presence immediately, as the physicians feared the worst.

Green said that I had already done everything, and that I ought to have some rest; so, he would go to Janesville. Accordingly, I gave him a letter of introduction to the sheriff of Rock county, and, in less than an hour, he had hired a buggy and started on his journey.

He reached Janesville at three o'clock in the morning; he then called up the sheriff and asked his assistance in arresting Sloan. The sheriff hurriedly dressed himself and accompanied Green to Sloan's room. Green had not forgotten his handcuffs, and, in an instant, Sloan was a prisoner.

Alice fairly cried for joy at her deliverance, but her joy vanished on hearing of Mary's illness.

Green brought both Sloan and Alice back to Rockford in the buggy he had used in going to Janesville; and, on reaching Rockford, Sloan was lodged in jail, while Alice went to Mary's bedside.

Blake lived through Monday, but died that night. I cared but little for this. I had done only my duty. I had



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the approval, not only of my own conscience, but, also, of all the law-loving people of Rockford. A death by violence was the natural end of such a life as Blake's. Sooner or later his sin was sure to find him out; in the course of my duty, I was the appointed instrument of vengeance.

The arrival of William and Alice did Mary much good, and she cheered up perceptibly. I thought it would be best to move her to Chicago, and the doctor agreed with me. We, therefore, started Tuesday morning by stage, and took the train at Belvidere. We reached Chicago without accident, and Mary was immediately taken to the Sherman House, where the proprietors, Messrs. Tuttle & Brown, had prepared their best room. The whole community deeply sympathized with the unfortunate family, and Mary received the greatest attention and kindness from every one.

Doctor McVickar was called, and his opinion was awaited with deep anxiety. When he came out from Mary's room, he said that it would be impossible for her to live. She had been poisoned by heavy doses of cantharides, or Spanish fly, administered for a purpose better imagined than described. It had been given to her in such large doses, and had had time to work into her system so thoroughly, that it would be impossible to save her.

Mrs. Wells was quite ill, at home, from the overpowering effects of grief, and Mr. Wells was not in Chicago, on our arrival there. He came on, immediately; but Mary had been dead an hour and a half, when he entered the Sherman House.

Poor Mary! Only a few days before, she had been so

full of life, so beautiful — now, she was a corpse. To her, however, death came as a release; and few would have cared to call her back to the suffering, which life would have entailed upon her.

Green obtained the necessary papers, and conveyed Sloan to the jail in Coldwater. He was there tried, convicted, and sentenced to imprisonment, at hard labor, for five years — the longest term allowable by law for his offense, at that time. The villains, Harris, Dick, and Joe, had taken an early alarm, and fled to the wilds of the Far West; so that they escaped, temporarily, from the hands of justice. Their further career was never known, but, in all probability, they were hanged.

CHAPTER XVI.

TEN eventful years passed away. I had entered into business, on my own account, and was doing well. I had gone into Montcalm County, Michigan, on the track of some parties, who were suspected of stealing goods from the Michigan Central Railroad. Montcalm County was just becoming settled up; and, as I drove along in my buggy, on my way to the little town of Stanton, I began to fear that I had lost my way. It was a very sultry summer day, and my horse jogged along, with drooping head, evidently suffering greatly from the heat. I, therefore, decided to stop at the first farm-house, to water my horse and inquire the way to Stanton.

I soon came in sight of a farm-house, situated in a large clearing. It was, evidently, a well-kept farm. The house was neat and comfortable; the fences and barns were in good order; and the stock looked well-fed and well-cared for. Everything showed thrifty, capable management.

I drove up to the house, and entered the open door. A handsome lady was seated at a table, sewing, and three children were playing around her. I asked her where I could get water for myself and my horse. She gave me a drink, took down a pail, and handed it to me, at the same time pointing to the well.

I thanked her, and made a few remarks about the fine appearance of her farm. She said nothing, but I noticed

that she looked at me in a very curious manner. I then went out, watered my horse, and returned to the house with the pail; the lady took it from me, and handed it to a brown-eyed little boy, to take into the house, all the time keeping her eyes fixed upon me. I have always had a great liking for a handsome face, and this lady was, certainly, a beauty; but she gazed at me so steadily that, I must confess, I was somewhat abashed. However, I asked the road to Stanton, which she told me; and I then turned to get into my buggy. At this, she inquired, in a shy, timid way:

“Is your name Pinkerton?”

This question was rather startling, as I did not wish to be known; and Montcalm County having been so recently settled, I had not expected to be recognized there. Still, I could not deceive her, so I said, politely:

“Yes, madam; but you have the advantage of me.”

She held out both her hands, and said, smilingly:

“Why, don’t you know me, Mr. Pinkerton?”

I looked at her, and then at her three children, but could not recall a single familiar feature; so I was obliged to say:

“No; I do not know you.”

“What! not know me! Why, I am Alice Wells,” she replied.

“Good gracious! is it possible!” I said. “Well, this is a pleasant surprise.”

I could hardly realize that it was Alice. She was married to an upright, intelligent farmer, and her husband was then at work in the field. She was determined that I

should stay all night, and would not take "no" for an answer.

Finding that I could not get away, I drove my horse into the barn, while she sent for her husband. When he came, Alice told him who I was; as he knew all her previous history, and my connection with it, he received me with great cordiality.

A pleasanter night than the one I spent under their roof, I never passed. They did all in their power to make my stay agreeable, and succeeded perfectly. They were admirably suited to each other, and were evidently as devoted lovers as ever they were in their days of courtship, of which they related to me many amusing and touching anecdotes.

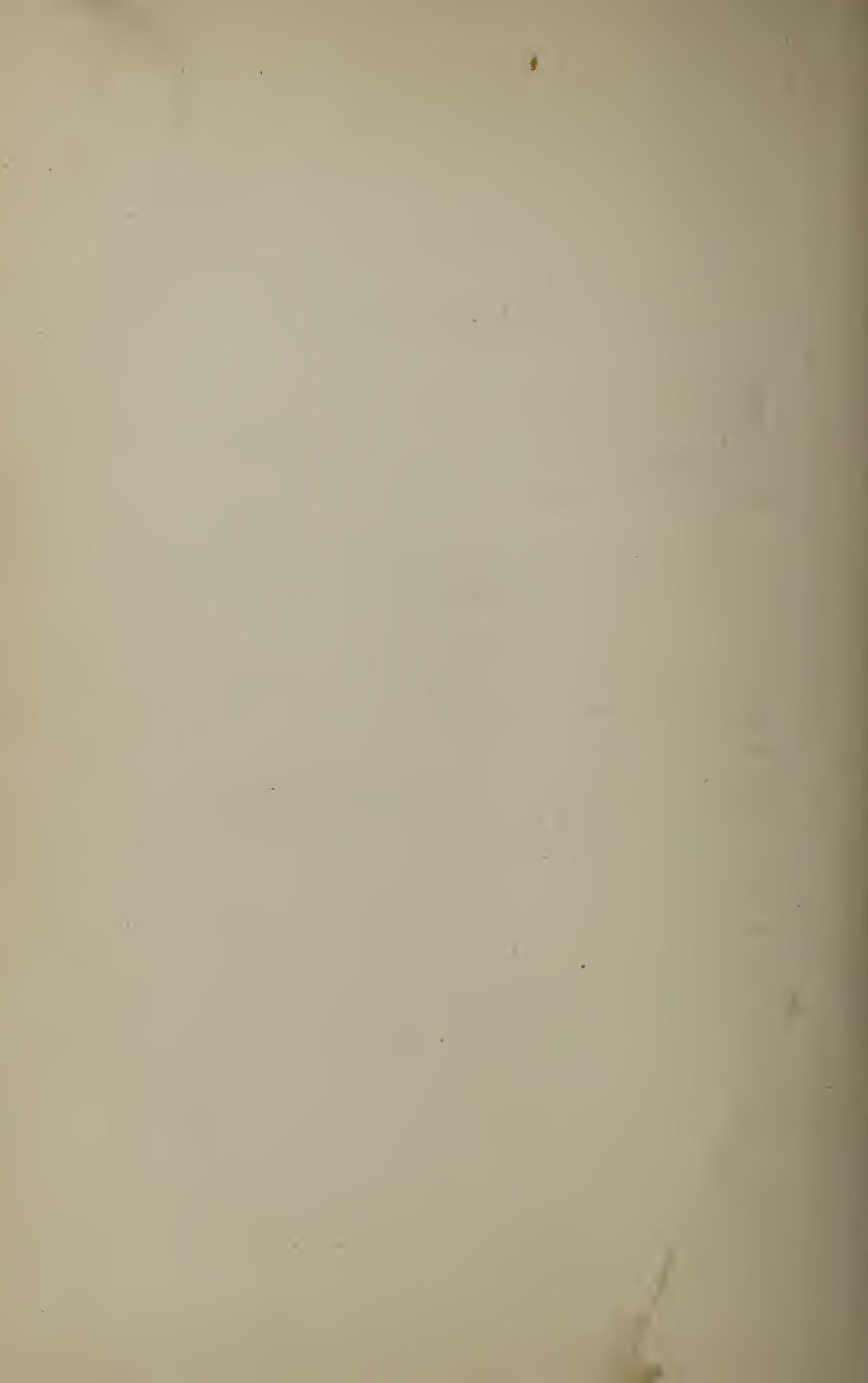
I have heard from them several times since then, and they seem to be as happy as mortals can ever expect to be.

THE END.

THE FRENCHMAN:

— OR —

THE BILLS OF EXCHANGE.



INTRODUCTION.

IN laying before the reading public the career of the most skillful and dangerous forger that ever operated in this, or, I may truthfully say, any other country, it will be necessary to say a few words, by way of preface.

During the years 1855 and 1856, the commercial communities of both the United States and the Canadas were startled by a series of forgeries on foreign bills of exchange, drawn on English bankers, so well executed, and so skillfully manipulated, as to leave not the slightest clue by which to trace the forgers. At this time, the Atlantic Cable was not in existence, and it took at least a month to send for advice and receive instructions from England.

Foreign bills of exchange, I will here state, for the information of those who do not know their nature, are bills drawn by one merchant or banker upon another, with whom he has an account. They are similar to drafts, with the exception that they are generally made out in two or three parts; so that, in case one part be lost, the others can be used. A "two-part" bill consists of an "original" and a "duplicate." A "three-part" bill consists of an original and two duplicates, which are called, respectively, "first," "second," and "third."

For example: suppose Henry Brown, of New York, wishes to send fifty pounds sterling to John Smith, of London. In order to do so, Brown goes to his banker,

and buys a three-part bill of exchange for fifty pounds, payable to his own order. The bill is issued to him in three parts, nearly exactly alike. He cuts off the first part, endorses it payable to Smith, and sends it by the first steamer. By the next steamer, he sends the second part, similarly endorsed; but he retains the third part until he shall hear from Smith. If Smith receives the first part, he gets it cashed; if, by any accident, however, the first part should be lost, Smith receives the second part in due time, and gets *that* cashed. The bank, on which the bill is drawn, invariably cashes *whichever part is first presented*.

If Brown, after buying the bill, decides not to send it to Smith, he can sell it to almost any banker in this country, who deals in foreign exchange. Brown, then, endorses *all three parts*, and gives them to the purchaser of the bill. If any part be missing, he must satisfactorily account for its absence.

The illustrations opposite page 253 of this book, will show the ordinary form of foreign bills of exchange.

THE FRENCHMAN:

OR, THE BILLS OF EXCHANGE.

CHAPTER I.

JULES IMBERT was born on the Island of Martinique, one of the French West Indies, in the year 1801. His father was a Frenchman of liberal education and polished manners, who, when quite a young man, was offered a clerkship in one of the leading business houses of Martinique. He accepted the offer, immediately proceeded to the island, and entered upon his duties. After serving his employers faithfully for several years, he was given a partnership; and, soon afterward, he married a beautiful Creole, a daughter of one of the partners. They had several children, but all of them, with the exception of Jules, the youngest, were drowned, while making a pleasure trip on Babycom Bay.

Jules, like most only sons, was petted by his mother, and humored by his father. By the time he was five or six years old, he displayed remarkable precocity, and his fond mother was never tired of telling anecdotes of his smart doings and witty sayings. Up to the age of sixteen, he remained at home, receiving his education from

tutors; but his father now determined to send him to Paris for a few years, not alone to complete his studies, but to see whether a knowledge of the world would not cure him of the insufferable self-conceit which he had acquired; for he displayed this fault in so offensive a manner, as to make him disliked by all with whom he came in contact.

He really had qualifications which placed him far above the average youth of his age; and any studies which his teachers might set before him, he mastered, seemingly, with little difficulty. He was a beautiful penman, and a good composer; was well posted in mathematics, and was a superior linguist. He was able to converse in German, English, and Italian, with as much fluency as in French, and with scarcely any foreign accent. But the great drawback to all his accomplishments was the fact, that he knew too well his possession of them. He had been so idolized at home, that he had come to consider himself a genius, and his attempts to carry out the character, made him simply ridiculous.

At the age of sixteen, Jules was sent to Paris. For a time, his self-conceit was completely forgotten in the presence of the splendors of that luxurious capital; but, it being made known that young Imbert had a large allowance at his disposal, he was soon surrounded by a crowd of sycophants and flatterers; then, as the wonders around him began to lose their charm, by familiarity, his old malady returned with redoubled force. He remained in Paris — devoting very little time to study, but squandering large sums of money — about ten years, when he was recalled to Martinique, by the sudden death of his father and

mother. Jules really loved his parents, and the blow was a severe one, rendered more so by the fact, that the news reached him while in the midst of his dissipations. He immediately started for Martinique; but, as he was obliged to go in a sailing vessel — steamships not being in general use at that time — he did not arrive at the island until nearly six months after his parents' death.

An examination into the affairs of his father disclosed the fact, that he had died insolvent; hence, Jules was forced to seek employment, to maintain himself. An old friend of his father gave him a minor clerkship; and, although he was a total stranger to any kind of labor, he was soon hard at work. Three years of steady application to business, took every particle of conceit out of him, and left him an agreeable, self-reliant gentleman. He rose from place to place, until he became cashier of the house. This was a position of great trust, since the house he was with — there being no banks on the island — performed all the duties usually left to those institutions. It was, doubtless, while here, that Imbert made his thorough acquaintance with bills of exchange.

After being with the house for five years, he threw up his position, purchased a few small coasting vessels with the money he had saved, and established a paying traffic with the neighboring islands. His business increased rapidly; and, by the time he had reached his fiftieth year, he was a wealthy man. At this period of his life, Imbert was an example of the highest type of a successful West India merchant. He had purchased, for his home, a "Pen," situated a few miles from town. This is the name which the inhabitants of Martinique so modestly give to

their beautiful country-seats, in the interior of the island. It was beautifully located, on a fertile ridge overlooking the sea, and was surrounded by orange groves, banana plantations, and gardens, filled with the choicest tropical fruits and plants. Sparkling fountains made soft murmurs to lull the ear, and works of art everywhere met the eye. The cooling "trade-wind," as it swept through the long, rambling house, came laden with delicious perfume; and every luxury, which taste could suggest and wealth procure, was there. It was well worthy of being called a little earthly paradise.

Imbert was married, but had no children. His wife did not exactly love him, nor he, her; yet they got along very comfortably together. He devoted the greater part of the day to managing his business, and spent his evenings in pleasant social reunions with his neighbors. Yet, with all his luxuries, Imbert was not happy.

Among his friends, was an Italian merchant, who, though very wealthy, was still troubled with an insatiable craving for gold. As Imbert had no financial dealings with him, they always were on the best of terms. This Italian had a very beautiful daughter, and it seemed as if the only person who could draw him away from his avaricious habits was his child, Beatrice, whose mother had died at her birth. Imbert, being childless, had prevailed on the Italian to let his wife take charge of Beatrice; and so she had grown up, partly in Imbert's care, partly in her father's, until she was now eighteen years old.

Beatrice, though she had arrived at an age when, according to custom, she should have been calm, sedate, and reserved, was just the opposite; in reality, she was one

of the noisiest little romps to be found. She was so light and airy in her movements that her father called her his “dancing fairy.” She was not the cold, powerful, commanding beauty, who breaks down the door to one’s heart, but the lovely little sprite, who smuggles herself in through the key-hole, and has possession before one knows it. Her head was small and elegant in shape, and her features were all perfectly regular. Her eyes were dark blue, almost black, and their expression varied with every emotion of her mind; though the laughing expression predominated. Her hair was literally a “crowning beauty,” and, when loosened from its fastenings, it fell almost to her feet, covering her with a golden shower. Her complexion was a pale olive, with an almost imperceptible tinge of red in her cheeks. A plump, graceful figure, small hands and feet, and a sweet Italian voice, complete an imperfect outline sketch of this beautiful girl.

From her earliest childhood, Beatrice had dearly loved “Uncle Jules,” as she used to call Imbert. His vivacity, the charm of his manner, and his seemingly inexhaustible fund of knowledge, had charmed her as a child, and caused her to look up to him as something superior, when she became a woman. Imbert, of course, loved Beatrice: at first, it was with the love of a parent for a darling child; but, as she grew to be a beautiful woman, he found his love had turned into a passion. Hence, he could not endure the thought of her marriage, and the separation from him that would ensue; and this it was, that interfered with his happiness.

At this time, he was doing a very prosperous business, the secret of his success being, that, for many years, he

had been engaged in smuggling to a large extent; this, of course, made his profits enormous. His plans were so well-laid and so quietly carried out, that he had not the slightest fear of detection. But crime will show itself. The old Italian merchant had, by means of his intimacy with Imbert, obtained a clue to the latter's operations; and, with a baseness only to be found in sordid natures, he informed on his friend, for the sake of the informer's reward. Imbert was arrested, and thrown into prison; there he remained a week, and was then brought to trial. He was found guilty of smuggling; and, as his operations had been enormous, extending over many years, it was adjudged that his estate should be confiscated to cover the amount of the penalty. On being discharged from custody, he found himself once more a free man, but almost a beggar. To Beatrice, the blow was a cruel one, and she was almost heart-broken at the thought that her father had been the cause of all Imbert's troubles.

While in prison, Imbert had formed a plan to revenge himself on the Italian, and, also, to gratify his greatest passion — his love for Beatrice. Proceeding to his "Pen," which he found in possession of the government police, he passed into the drawing-room, where he discovered Beatrice consoling his wife. Without being seen by the latter, he managed to attract Beatrice's attention, and beckoned her to follow him. Imbert conducted her to a secluded part of the grounds, where, taking her in his arms, he poured out his tale of love, and begged her to fly with him; great as was his pecuniary loss, he said, if she would only become his companion in flight, he would be more than repaid. The influence he had acquired



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over her was irresistible, and she finally consented. He directed her to go home, seize what money she could, and meet him, at four o'clock the next morning, just outside her father's grounds.

At the appointed time, she was there, and Imbert, in again clasping her to his heart, had the pleasure of gratifying, at the same moment, two opposite passions — love and revenge. Without an instant's delay, they proceeded to the harbor and embarked on a vessel, which was ready to sail. The sailors were weighing anchor as they stepped on board; the sails were soon set; and, assisted by the gentle land-breeze, the ship rapidly left the harbor. Imbert and Beatrice seated themselves on deck, to take a last look at their native island, which was slowly sinking out of sight, never to be seen by them again. Beatrice, at first, shed a few tears, as she remembered that she had parted forever from her father; but she soon checked them, for fear they would annoy Imbert. Her reverence for the latter, who had complete control over her, took away any feeling of wrong-doing, and her girlish, romantic nature was buoyed up by the thought, that she was to share his exile, and suffer equally with him.

Imbert gave himself up to pleasing reflections. He was now fifty-one years old, but did not look to be forty. He had arrived at an age when most men have settled themselves for life; yet he had been just stripped of his fortune. To offset this, he had perfect health, a thorough knowledge of business, nearly ten thousand dollars in cash — including what Beatrice had taken from her father — and, best of all, the beautiful Beatrice, whom he would now call his wife.

After a short voyage, the vessel reached Havana ; there Imbert and Beatrice remained for a year, giving themselves up to a life of gaiety and enjoyment. At length, however, the large sums necessary to keep up their establishment nearly drained Imbert's purse, and compelled him to go to New Orleans, to seek some kind of business. He took with him letters of introduction, which admitted him to the best society of the city, but which did not get him employment. Finding that he could do nothing at New Orleans, he went to Mobile. There, he remained out of employment for nearly a year, during part of which time they suffered for want of the common necessities of life ; in fact, all of Beatrice's trinkets and finery were pledged in different pawnshops.

At length, Imbert obtained the position of supercargo on a vessel about to sail for Barbadoes, with a cargo of pitch-pine. He received permission to take his wife with him, and the vessel sailed, with them on board, November 2, 1854. The poverty of the past year had so worked upon Imbert's too sensual nature, as to make him ready for almost any kind of scheme which would restore him to wealth and luxury. Henceforward, his career was one of continuous crime.

CHAPTER II.

WHILE at sea, Imbert matured plans for a series of forgeries, which he had had in contemplation for some time; and he was unexpectedly aided by an incident of the voyage. The captain of the vessel was taken ill; and, although Imbert nursed him with great assiduity, his disease proved fatal. On the arrival of the ship at Barbadoes, December 4, 1854, Imbert proclaimed himself the owner of the cargo, and proceeded to sell it. The American consul suspected that there was something wrong about the transaction; but he had no means of verifying his suspicions. All that he could do, therefore, was to send the vessel home in charge of the mate.

The purchaser of the cargo was a well-to-do merchant, named Samuel P. Mussen. While transacting business with this gentleman, Imbert learned that his New York correspondent was the firm of Middleton & Co. On learning this fact, Imbert wrote a forged letter to Middleton & Co., dated December 18, 1854, and signed it "Samuel P. Mussen." The letter purported to introduce Mr. Fred. Jourdan, from whom Mussen had bought a cargo of pitch pine, which Jourdan had brought from Mobile. Imbert then wrote another letter to Middleton & Co., dated January 17, 1855, enclosing *two parts* of a bill of exchange for £100 sterling, which he had purchased from Mussen. He instructed Middleton & Co. to negotiate the bill and

send the proceeds to George Daristi, City Hotel, Savannah. He signed this letter "Fred. Jourdan;" he enclosed also the forged letter, introducing Jourdan to Middleton & Co., and sent the documents by the first vessel. He then enclosed the *third* part of the same bill, (of which he had sent Middleton & Co. the first and second parts,) in a letter to a London bank for collection, with instructions to send the amount to Spafford & Co., of New York, there to be placed to the credit of George Daristi. Having laid his trap to ensnare Middleton & Co., Imbert remained a short time on the island, and then sailed for Savannah.

He now had plenty of money, and was able to give Beatrice every luxury that wealth could procure. On the voyage, he disclosed his plans to her and instructed her as to the different characters they were to assume. She, as usual, acquiesced wholly in his schemes, having no desire to oppose his wishes in the slightest particular. On their arrival in Savannah, they went to the City Hotel, where Imbert signed the register, "George Daristi and wife," at the same time informing the clerk that he wished the best suite of rooms in the house. As he expected, he found a letter awaiting him from Middleton & Co., enclosing their check on the Merchants' Bank of New York, payable to the order of George Daristi. The amount was the proceeds of the sale of the bill of exchange, being nearly five hundred dollars. Highly gratified by the promptness of Middleton & Co., Imbert wrote them a letter, dated Bay State, Florida, January 31, 1855, and signed "F. Jourdan," acknowledging the receipt of the check by Daristi. After a few days, leaving Beatrice in Savannah, Imbert made a flying visit to New York, and

called on Middleton & Co., to whom he introduced himself as George Daristi; producing their check, he asked them to identify him at the bank. This they did, and he drew the money. He then had the bank identify him to Spafford & Co.; finding that the proceeds of the bill sent to England had just arrived and had been placed to his credit, he drew the amount. Thus, his first speculation in bills of exchange had netted him the snug profit of one hundred per cent.

It will be interesting, here, to notice the great simplicity of Imbert's plans, and the readiness with which his victims fell into his trap. He did not attempt to forge *new* bills, knowing the extreme risk of such an operation; but he simply paid cash for genuine bills, and then obtained double payment on them. The irregularity did not affect the English bankers on whom the bills were drawn. They cashed the "third" part of the bills sent for collection, as they were required to do: it was none of their affair to discover the whereabouts of the "first" and "second" parts. But the bankers in the United States, who bought the "first" and "second" parts without knowing the whereabouts of the "third" part, violated the rules of commercial dealing, and paid the penalty by the loss of the money advanced. If they had demanded *all three parts*, before negotiating the bills, Imbert never would have been able to fleece them so extensively.

Now, why did not these merchants and bankers act with more prudence? Why did they buy only two parts of a bill, knowing that it was possible that the missing "third" had been forwarded to England for collection, making the first two parts valueless? The answer to

these questions will serve for an explanation of the method by which nearly every similar swindle is successfully carried out. The men who undertake to pass forged drafts and checks for any large amounts are thoroughly conversant with every feature of commercial routine and business customs. Their preliminary steps are generally taken in strict accordance with the rules of legitimate trade. Having laid a foundation of credit by an adherence to genuine business principles, the forger proceeds to erect a fabric of fraud. The confidence of his victim being once obtained, the latter never considers it necessary to demand a rigid compliance with all the precautions usually taken in dealing with strangers; or, if he should be one of the habitually cautious kind, requiring full information, the gentlemanly and agreeable customer explains every thing so frankly and plausibly, that all suspicions are at once removed. The minor points are as carefully attended to as the important ones; even the effect of dress and general appearance is fully considered. Moreover, the forger is a keen observer and a shrewd judge of human nature. The details of his story will often depend upon the character of the person whom he intends to swindle. He can tell very soon whether his scheme will succeed; and, when he finds suspicion has been excited, he draws off gracefully, to make the attempt elsewhere. This readiness to detect even the faintest gleam of distrust will be illustrated later in these pages.

Imbert remained only a day or two in New York, and then returned to Savannah, whence he proceeded, with Beatrice, to Charleston. Here, Mr. "George Gomer"

and his beautiful wife were, for a time, the lions of society. Imbert understood the advantage of having a reputation for wealth and position. Hence, he spent money lavishly and moved in the best society of the city. At the same time, he continued his operations so very successfully as to realize more than eleven thousand dollars in about two weeks. He invested this money in cotton, and shipped the latter to New York; there it was sold by Schmidt & Co., at a large profit, the proceeds being sent to him at Baltimore, where he then was. Leaving Baltimore, Imbert made a tour of all the principal Southern cities, operating extensively in the same way wherever he went, almost always with success. In fact, the effect of his trip was almost as disastrous to the commercial communities of the South, as Sherman's march to the sea was to the armies of the Confederacy, during the late war. At least, he managed to "beat" all he came in contact with.

In Charleston, he made one negotiation which eventually led to his arrest. He purchased, (under his alias of George Gomer,) from the Bank of Charleston, a three-part bill of exchange on the Bank of Liverpool. He mailed the "third" part to Baring Bros. & Co., requesting them to place the amount to the credit of Blanchard, Sherman & Co., of Boston, subject to the order of Henri Best. He kept the first two parts until he reached Baltimore; he then sold them to the Baltimore branch of Brown Bros. & Co., giving them good evidence—as they thought—where the third part was. When sufficient time had elapsed, he went to Boston, accompanied by the ever-faithful Beatrice; calling at the office of Blanchard,

Sherman & Co., he demanded payment of the amount which they held to the credit of Henri Best. The bankers, thinking there was something a little unusual in the transaction, refused to pay him for a week; but, at the end of that time, being unable to give any reason for further delay, they paid him the amount. In the meantime, Brown Bros. & Co. had presented the first two parts of the bill in Liverpool, for payment; then it was discovered that the third part had already been paid to Baring Bros. & Co. When the Baltimore branch of the house received this information, instructions were sent to the Boston branch to obtain all the facts possible from Blanchard, Sherman & Co. On conferring with that firm, the Boston agent began to suspect that "Gomer" and "Best" were names assumed by one and the same person; and search was immediately commenced for him. After Imbert had drawn his money, he returned to his hotel, intending to start for New York the next day; but an unforeseen event detained him. Beatrice had become completely worn out with excitement and travel. There were no Pullman palace cars in those days, nor were the other comforts of travel by any means equal to those of the present time; so that a series of long journeys, without sufficient rest between them, had quite broken down the strength of the fair Beatrice. A severe cold, caught on the way to Boston, grew gradually worse, until, by the day that they were to start for New York, she was too sick to be moved. Inflammation of the lungs set in, and although every thing was done that medical skill could devise and money procure, nothing could save her. She was not naturally

of strong vitality, and the fatigues of the last few weeks had undermined her strength; within a week she died.

As Imbert was called to take a last look at Beatrice—the beautiful “Lily of the South,” as she was called—whom he had trampled under foot to gratify his passions, who would have envied him his feelings?

The day after the funeral, as Imbert was pacing up and down the long hall of the hotel, trying vainly to dispel his sense of loneliness and remorse, a stranger asked him whether he was Henri Best. On replying affirmatively, he was taken into custody by the Chief of Police, on a charge of forgery. He was sent to Baltimore, on the demand of the Governor of Maryland, and was there identified as the man who had sold the first two parts of the bill, under the name of George Gomer. He was remanded to jail to await trial, but was released, in less than six months, on “straw bail.”

He immediately resumed his favorite plan of making money. In June, 1856, he sent to one of the principal shipping-houses of Baltimore, a forged letter, purporting to be from Indoes & Co., of St. Thomas. This letter bore the private marks of the firm, and endorsed the credit and character of one, Louis Ricard. He next presented, in person, a letter from Indoes & Co., introducing himself as Louis Ricard to the Baltimore house. On the strength of his introduction, he purchased flour to the value of four thousand three hundred dollars, and paid for it with a forged bill of exchange, drawn on Rothschilds & Cohen, London. He then sent the flour to New York, where it was sold, and the proceeds were remitted to him, under his assumed name.

At this time, he was fifty-five years old. He was five feet, nine and one-half inches in height, and was sparely built, but of good figure; head, large and intellectual, covered with black hair, slightly curly; complexion, sallow; face, clean-shaven, except a long, heavy moustache, waxed at the ends; eyes, black, and very magnetic, always in motion, taking in everything at a glance. His mouth was his weakest feature, being large and sensual. He always dressed neatly, and his general appearance was that of a man of large abilities and ample fortune. He was very affable in his manners, and his conversation was peculiarly attractive. He felt that he was growing old, and that he must endeavor to lay up a fortune for his support in his declining years. Flushed with his previous success, he determined to operate upon a larger scale. The plan adopted was, in general, the same as that hitherto employed; there were some important additions, however, which were wholly original, and which showed remarkable ingenuity.

And now, before giving the details of the forgeries which put me on Imbert's track, I would like to enter my protest against the way in which the "detective" is generally represented, in the modern novel and on the stage. The detective of the novel is a very thrilling character, the personification of silence, and the soul of mystery. When called in to work up a case, he answers all questions in monosyllables — if he deign to answer at all — taps his employer mysteriously on the shoulder, draws him into a dark closet, and says :

“Do you see that?”

If the employer answers “yes,” he replies :

“No, you don’t; but *I* do.—Leave it to me !”

In fact, he may be described as a man with conundrum on the brain.

On the stage, he is still more amusing, and the moment he appears, every one recognizes him; no matter what disguise he may assume, the small boys chaff him unmercifully, knowing at once that it is the detective. I would not give much for his chances among genuine, desperate criminals.

The detective of real life is a very different character. An actor sometimes tries to play the part of a detective on the stage; the detective must *always* be an actor, and nine-tenths of the actors on the stage to-day, would do well to take lessons in their own profession, from him. He must be able to be, to-day, the associate of gentlemen; — to-morrow, the boon companion of the lowest classes of society. At an instant’s warning, he must be ready to go wherever he may be ordered. Sometimes, for weeks, he may have little or no rest; and he may be called upon to endure hardships and dangers which few men have the courage to face. A detective on my force must remember the motto, “Crime never sleeps.”

The individual detective of former days has passed away, or, if he exists, has become corrupt. In order to capture the perpetrators of crime in this immense country, peopled by every nationality on the globe, it has become necessary to establish large agencies, conducted with the most perfect system. In tracing criminals, the manager of an agency, like the general of an army, lays out the plans and selects the men to carry them out; sometimes, in important matters, going to the field of

operations to direct in person, but generally giving his instructions from the main office, where he has hundreds of cases to look after at a time.

With this trifling digression, I will return to the history of Jules Imbert's crimes.

£ 2,860

New York June 7th 1856.

John Mathes' alms eight ^{and fourt} Pay this first of exchange,
Second and third unpaid, to the order of
Henry Alexander Day sum
Two thousand eight hundred pounds Sterling
Value received, and charge to account of /
To Mr. Hobbley & Co
London Accts.



The Belmont Bill, first and second, of Exchange.—Page 253.

£ 2,860

New York June 7th 1856.

John Mathes' alms eight ^{and fourt} Pay this second of exchange,
First and third unpaid, to the order of
Henry Alexander Day sum
Two thousand eight hundred pounds Sterling
Value received, and charge to account of /
To Mr. Hobbley & Co
London Accts.



£ 2,800

New York June 7th 1856.

John ^{and son} Alexander ^{and son} Belmont
(first and second unpaid,) to the order of
William Alexander Day number
Two thousand eight hundred pounds Sterling
Value received, and charge to account of
To Mr. De Rothschild (Bros)
London Accts.
No 15437

The Belmont Bill, third and fourth, of Exchange.—Page 253.

£ 2,800

New York June 7th 1856.

John ^{and son} Alexander ^{and son} Belmont
(first and third unpaid,) to the order of
William Alexander Day number
Two thousand eight hundred pounds Sterling
Value received, and charge to account of
To Mr. De Rothschild (Bros)
London Accts.
No 15437

CHAPTER III.

ONE morning in June, 1856, Jules Imbert stepped into the office of A. Belmont, in New York, introduced himself as Alexander Gay, and stated that he would like a bill of exchange made out for £2,800 sterling, payable to his own order. The clerk, a German, was just making out a regular three-part bill, when Gay stepped up to him, and said :

“If it is not too much trouble, be so good as to make the bill out in *four* parts; as who knows but that the other parts may be lost. If I have a failing, I must say, it is in being over-cautious.”

The clerk, not thinking it likely that a man who could buy a bill of exchange for such a large amount, (nearly fourteen thousand dollars) would be apt to commit a fraud, regarded the request as merely a whim, and made out the bill as desired. Imbert paid cash for the bill, went to his hotel, and started on a tour through the West, intending to stop at Saratoga and Niagara Falls, to recruit his health.

I have sketched the operations of Imbert, up to this period of his life, from information gained after his final capture; and it must be remembered that, up to this time, I had had no personal knowledge of him. I will now relate the manner in which he first came under my notice, and the means by which I was enabled to bring him to justice.

In the month of August, 1856, I left Chicago for the purpose of making the circuit of the large Western cities, in search of stolen property. The numerous routes which to-day, make communication so rapid, were not then in existence; and, in consequence, very circuitous routes were traveled, in passing from city to city. Therefore, a journey then was a much more arduous affair than now. From Chicago, I went to Pittsburgh; thence to Crestline; from Crestline to Cincinnati; and from there to Cleveland (the only route at that time from Cincinnati to Chicago), and back to Chicago by the Toledo & Cleveland and the Michigan Southern Railways.

I entered my office in the early part of the afternoon, tired and sleepy, from my journey; but I was immediately summoned to the office of R. K. Swift, Bro. & Johnston, prominent bankers of the city. I took with me two of my best men, George H. Bangs and Timothy Webster. Bangs is now my General Superintendent in New York. Webster, who, afterwards, met a martyr's death at Richmond, Va., while serving his country as one of her truest patriots, was equally a hero with Cooper's "Harvey Birch."

On approaching the bank, I saw the portly form of R. K. Swift in the doorway. Catching sight of me, he exclaimed:

"Run! Pinkerton! Run!"

Tired though I was, this put me immediately on the alert; and I asked what he meant by saying "run!" and whom did he wish me to capture. He pointed to a man just getting into a Clark street omnibus, and said:

"That's the man! I want you to 'spot' him."

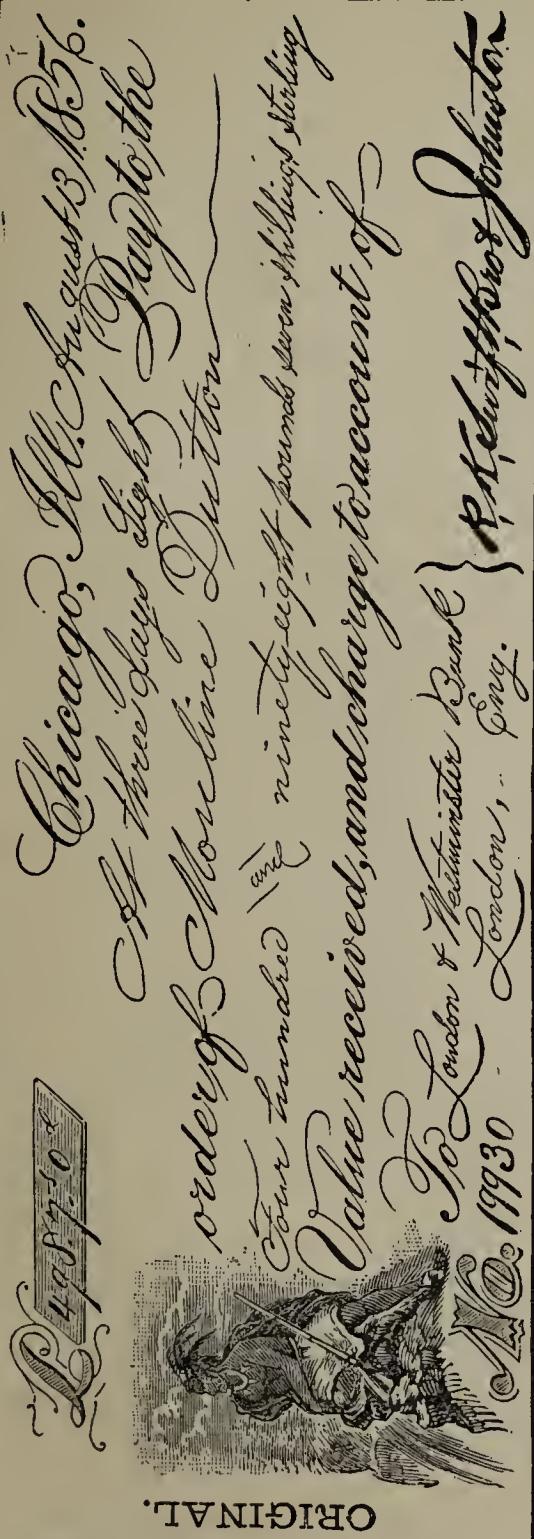
In less time than it takes to tell it, I had pointed out the man to Bangs and Webster, giving them instructions to follow him; one, was to keep always on his track, the other, to bring reports, and get orders from me. They were off instantly, and I followed Mr. Swift into his private office. I found that he knew nothing positively wrong about the man, but that he had had his suspicions aroused by circumstances, which he proceeded to relate, as follows:

On the morning of the seventh of August, a well-dressed, gentlemanly-appearing man called at the office of R. K. Swift, Bro. & Johnston, introduced himself as Alexander Gay, and asked whether they had received any notice from Detroit, relative to a small draft. He was told that they had not, and he went away, stating that he would call again. The noon mail brought them a letter from the Peninsula Bank, of Detroit, containing the signature of Alexander Gay. That gentleman called again in the afternoon, and presented a draft on them for fifty dollars, drawn by the Peninsula Bank, of Detroit, and payable to his order. His signature was found to be identical with the one forwarded from Detroit, and the money was paid to him. Afterward, in conversation, Gay created a very favorable impression on the bankers by the suavity of his manners and the fund of knowledge he possessed. In the course of his remarks on commercial matters, with which he was thoroughly acquainted, he showed great familiarity with all kinds of banking and mercantile business; and finally, he produced a bill of exchange for £2,800 sterling, first, second, and third, drawn by A. Belmont, of New York, on N. M. Rothschild & Sons, of

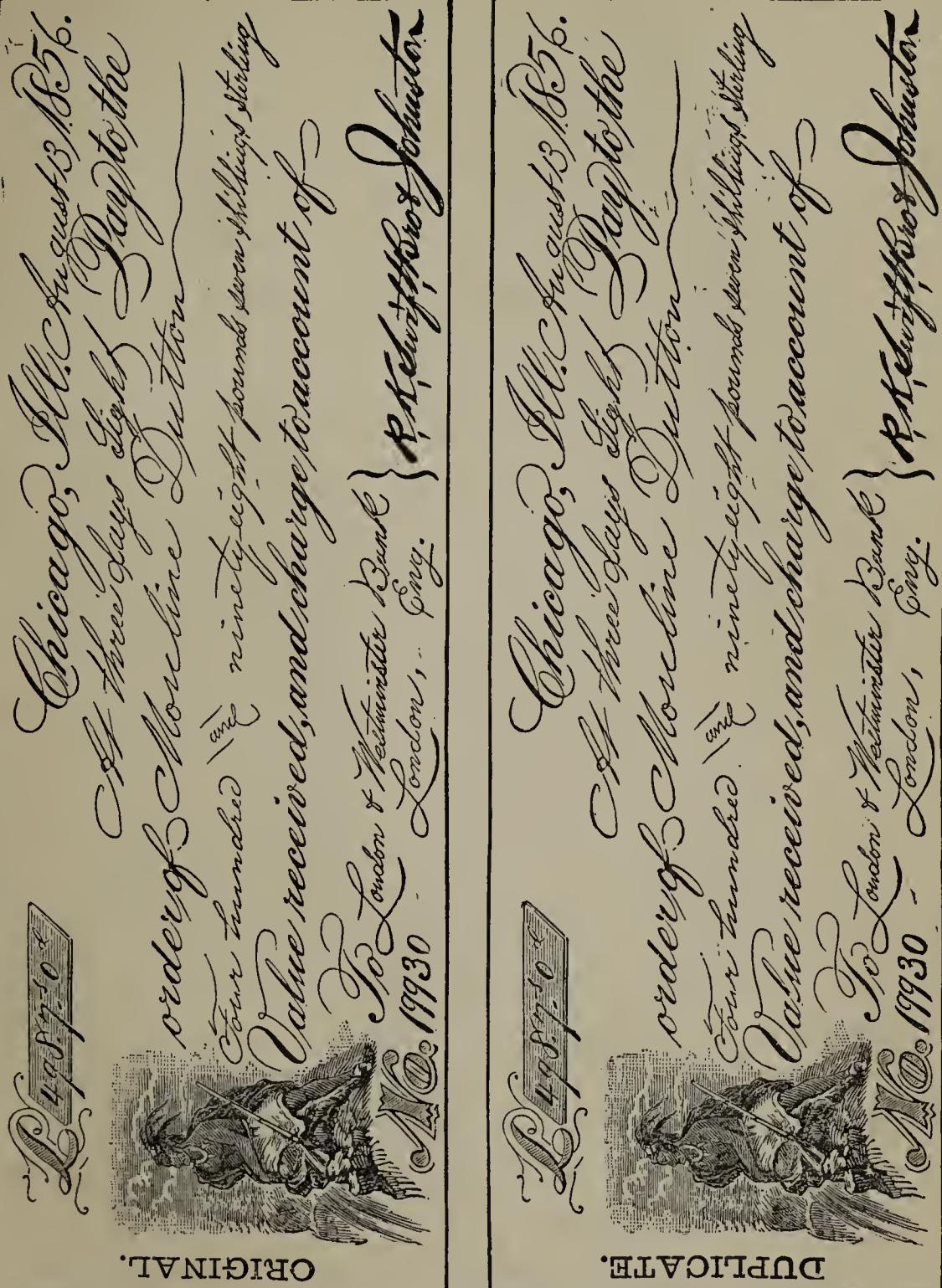
London, No. 5,437, payable to the order of Alexander Gay at three days sight, and dated June 7, 1856. This bill, Gay was anxious to sell at a low rate, stating that he had made a good bargain in real estate, and he needed a considerable sum in cash to consummate it. Mr. Swift declined purchasing the bill, for the reason that the firm was not used to dealing in exchange so extensively. Gay then went away, saying that he intended to settle in the West to do business.

On the thirteenth of August, he called again. This time he had nearly fourteen thousand dollars, in one hundred dollar bills of the Bank of the State of Missouri, which were then as good as gold. He now wished to *purchase* exchange on England; and, as he had wished to *sell*, only a few days before, they thought the circumstances rather singular, and made some inquiries of him. Gay stated that, failing to sell the Belmont bill for £2,800 sterling, in Chicago, he had gone to St. Louis, where he had sold it to E. W. Clark & Bro., receiving the one hundred dollar bills in payment. Mr. Swift, accordingly, telegraphed to Clark & Bro., who replied that they had paid the bills to Gay. While waiting an answer to the telegram, Mr. Swift made a number of inquiries of Gay, particularly with regard to his reasons for wishing to *purchase* exchange so soon after *selling*. During this interview, Gay gave such frank, plausible answers, and explained his objects and intentions so freely and reasonably, that the suspicions of Mr. Swift and his partners were almost wholly overcome. Finally, they agreed to sell him the bills he wished, but proposed to issue time bills, payable at sixty days. Gay refused to take anything but sight paper, however, and the

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R. K. Swift Bro. & Johnston's Bill of Exchange, No. 19,930—Page 257.

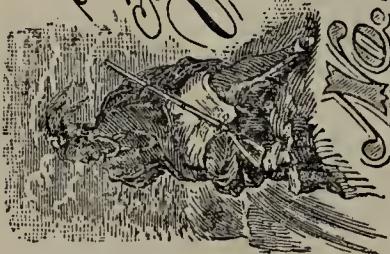


19931

Chicago, Ill. August 13, 1856.
Colt three days eight days to the
order of **Montane**
Four hundred and ninety-eight pounds seven shillings sterling
Value received, and charged to account of
To London & Westminster Bank } **R. Swift, Bro. & Johnston**
19931 London, Eng.

19931

ORIGINAL.



19931

Chicago, Ill. August 13, 1856.
Colt three days eight days to the
order of **Montane**
Four hundred and ninety-eight pounds seven shillings sterling
Value received, and charged to account of
To London & Westminster Bank } **R. Swift, Bro. & Johnston**
19931 London, Eng.

19931

DUPLICATE.



terms were, at length, agreed to. While making the arrangements, he inquired very minutely as to the form of bill used by the firm, and learned everything possible, relative to their mode of dealing in exchange. Gay then gave them a memorandum of the way in which he wanted the bills made out, and they were drawn accordingly.

They consisted of six bills, drawn by R. K. Swift, Bro. & Johnston, on the London and Westminster Bank, of London, payable to the order of Mouline Dutton, all dated August 13, 1856. Their numbers and amounts were as follows :

No.	£	s	d
19,930	498	7	0
19,931	498	7	0
19,932	497	9	6
19,933	497	9	6
19,934	349	1	6
19,935	349	1	6

Just before Gay left the bank, Mr. Swift sent for me, as his suspicions were not wholly allayed ; as Gay started off, the banker became nervous, lest I should fail to arrive in time, and, losing his presence of mind, he greeted me in the excited manner before related.

CHAPTER IV.

WITH Mr. Swift's story in my mind, I returned to my office, to think the matter over. There were some suspicious circumstances, but nothing tangible enough to act upon. It was evident that no profit could be made by buying and selling exchange, as Gay was doing; and, the more I reflected upon the matter, the more I became convinced that something was wrong. In the evening, Bangs brought me a report which confirmed my suspicions, and I determined to solve the mystery. Webster had followed out my instructions with his habitual secrecy and skill; so that, from the moment Gay seated himself in the omnibus, he was under the observation of a man who would watch his every action with the care of a guardian angel, entirely unknown to the object of his attention. Gay proceeded to the St. Nicholas, then a leading hotel, on Clark street, near Polk; as he went up the steps, he brushed by his guardian angel, who had arrived at the foot of the front stairway a second before him. Gay made some slight changes in his dress, and remained at the hotel until supper-time, holding no communication with any one, but sitting in the reading-room, apparently lost in thought. Bangs and Webster took supper at the same table with him, but he remained silent during the whole meal. After supper, he walked leisurely to his own room, made some further changes in his cloth-

ing, and came down to the office. While conversing with the clerk, he made some inquiries about the trains; this being overheard by Webster, led the latter to send Bangs, to me for instructions, as it was evident that Gay was about to depart. Accordingly, I sent Bangs back to Webster with some money, and instructions to follow Gay as long as the funds would hold out.

Gay smoked and chatted with the clerk until nearly train-time; he then paid his bill and departed, satchel in hand. Reaching an unfrequented spot, he changed his coat for an old, well-worn blouse, and put on a pair of very green spectacles and a slouch hat. His appearance was, thus, so greatly changed, that few persons would have been able to recognize him as the tastefully-dressed Alexander Gay, who had visited Mr. Swift. His movements had been carefully noted by the discreet Webster, however, and when Gay took the Michigan Central train, Webster seated himself where he could watch every movement of the suspicious character whom he had been detailed to follow. All the way to Detroit, Gay sat motionless; but, when within a short distance of the depot, he passed out to the platform and sprang off, while the cars were still in rapid motion. As he jumped on one side, the detective passed to the other end of the car and stepped off on the opposite side; so that, when Gay dodged around to the Canada boat, his "shadow" was close behind him. - At Windsor, they both took the train for Hamilton, whence Webster telegraphed to me for further instructions. As I had been unable to interest any one in the case, I was reluctantly obliged to recall him; though I felt convinced that some fraud was in contem-

plation, or had been already committed, by the so-called Alexander Gay. The day after my interview with Mr. Swift, I sent a telegram to Clark & Bro., of St. Louis, asking whether the bill they had bought of Gay was all right, and stating my suspicions with regard to him. They replied that Gay had brought a letter of introduction from I. H. Burch & Co., of Chicago, to Lucas & Simmonds, of St. Louis, and that, to all appearances, the transaction was perfectly regular. I then made inquiries of I. H. Burch & Co., and learned that Gay had bought a draft from them on Lucas & Simmonds, payable to his order, for two hundred dollars. He had requested I. H. Burch & Co., to forward his signature to Lucas & Simmonds, as he had no acquaintances in St. Louis. This, they had done, but had given him no letter of introduction. I, therefore, advised Clark & Bro. of this circumstance, which, at last, put them on the alert, and led to further developments.

It was discovered that Gay had written to Lucas & Simmonds, August 9, 1856, offering for sale a bill of exchange for £2,800 sterling, on the Rothschilds, which he had been unable to sell in Chicago without heavy loss; if their offer suited, he would send it to them. On the twelfth, he called upon them in person, drew the two hundred dollars on the Burch draft, and proposed to negotiate the bill of exchange which he had previously mentioned. As they did not wish to purchase, he called on Clark & Bro., to whom he offered the draft, referring them to Lucas & Simmonds. On making inquiries of the latter, Clark & Bro. were satisfied that Gay was all right; they, therefore, purchased the bill, paying for it in one hundred

dollar bills, and immediately sending it forward, for collection, to their New York house, Clarke, Dodge & Co. By this time, I had convinced Clark & Bro. that something was wrong, and had obtained authority to carry on the investigation for them.

I had decided upon a plan to save them from loss, in case the Belmont bill should prove to be a forgery. In pursuance of this plan, I called upon Messrs. R. K. Swift, Bro. & Johnston, laid the facts before them, and asked them to stop the payment of the bills which they had sold to Gay. At my earnest solicitation, for the protection of Messrs. Clark & Bro., they consented (though at the risk of endangering their own commercial credit) to stop the payment of their bills. No time was to be lost. It was now the fifteenth of the month, and late in the day. The drafts would leave New York on the steamer of the sixteenth. If the letter of advice, stopping the payment of the bills, failed to go by that steamer also, Clark & Bro.'s chances of saving anything would be very small. Swift, Bro. & Johnston immediately telegraphed to their New York branch, Swift, Ransom & Co., who wrote to the London and Westminster Bank to refuse payment of the bills drawn in favor of Mouline Dutton. This letter was put on board the steamer *only seven minutes* prior to her time of sailing.

CHAPTER V.

HAVING stopped the payment of the Swift bills, I proceeded to find out the facts in regard to the Belmont bill for £2,800 sterling. I advised my New York agent of the occurrences at St. Louis and Chicago, and directed him to call at Belmont's to make inquiries about the bill. He, accordingly, asked Belmont's cashier whether they knew anything about a bill of exchange for £2,800 sterling, drawn in favor of Alexander Gay.

"Yes," said the cashier; "that bill was presented to us to-day for negotiation by Clarke, Dodge & Co., but we refused to buy."

"Why; was it a forgery?"

"Oh! no, indeed; we knew it to be a genuine three-part bill, drawn by us in June; but we feared that the signature of Alexander Gay, endorsing it, was a forgery."

The cashier then explained the reasons for so thinking, as follows: The clerk who made out the bill was a German, and, not being sure as to the way of spelling "Gay," he requested the purchaser to write the name, himself. The gentleman did so, and in forming the letter "y," in Gay, he brought up the hair-line, or tail of the letter, as in the letter "g;" while, in the endorsement, the hair-line was brought up as in the letter "q."

As the reader already knows, the bill was a *four-part*

one, made so at the particular request of Gay; and how the clerk could have forgotten the fourth part, while he so distinctly recalled the exact way in which Gay formed the letter "y," is a mystery beyond comprehension. At the time, however, the circumstance gave him a great deal of notoriety; and the skill he displayed in detecting the forgery made him the envy of all the New York bank clerks. When the whole truth became known, the firm were so thankful to him for preventing them from negotiating the bill, that they were willing to take no notice of his carelessness in making it out.

Notwithstanding Belmont's refusal to negotiate the bill, Clarke, Dodge & Co. sent forward one of the parts to London for collection. The bill having been recognized by Belmont as genuine, it became necessary to find the original Alexander Gay; but, although search was made in every direction, no trace of him could be found, nor could anything be discovered relative to Mouline Dutton. No news could be obtained from England, until the arrival of the steamer of September 16th; hence, some time passed without any developments, and the mystery seemed to grow deeper and darker.

On the 8th of September, Swift Bro. & Johnston received a telegram from Chapman & Co., of Montreal, dated September 6th, inquiring whether the Chicago bankers had sold Mouline Dutton a bill of exchange for over £200 sterling, on London. Mr. Swift immediately sent the telegram to me, and answered that such a draft had been sold; but that there were suspicious circumstances connected with the purchaser, which would make it inadvisable for them to negotiate it.

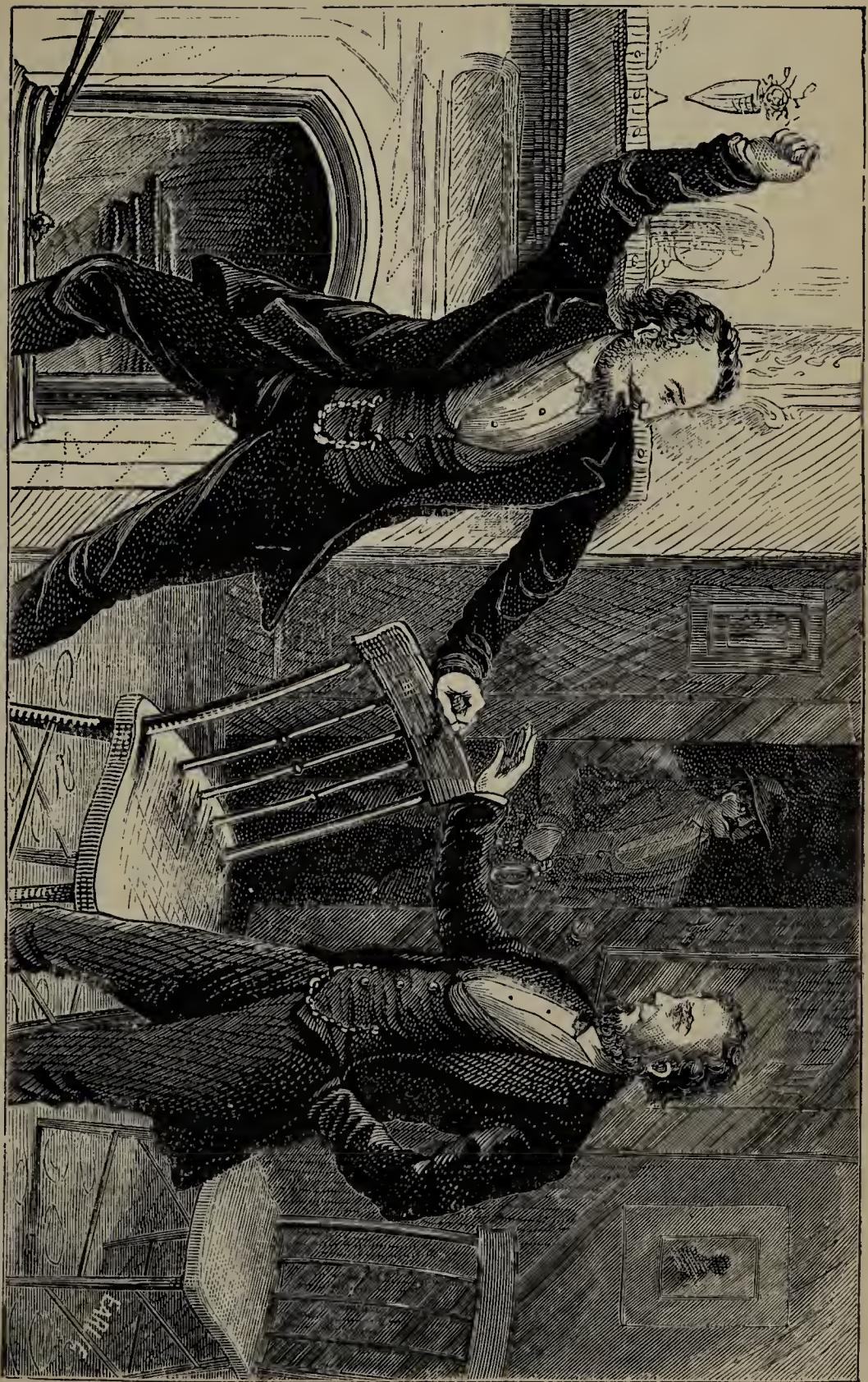
Having now obtained a clue to the whereabouts of Dutton, I laid my plans, and Bangs started the same evening for Montreal. The next morning, I received intelligence from Chapman & Co., with whom I had opened communication by telegraph, that the bill had been sent to them from Port Hope.

I always make it a rule to time my men, while traveling, and to have them inquire at specified places for dispatches. In this way, I was able to stop Bangs at Toronto, and turn his course to Port Hope.

On arriving there, he went to the North American Hotel, where he found the gentleman who had created such an excitement in Chicago and St. Louis, as Alexander Gay; he had now resumed his own name, Jules Imbert. He had shaved off his moustache, and made other alterations in his personal appearance; but Bangs soon detected his disguise. Having satisfied himself that Imbert was identical with Gay, Bangs called upon Thomas Turner, Esq., the agent of Chapman & Co., and sent for the chief constable of the town. He then showed them a strong chain of suspicious circumstances concerning Imbert, *alias* Gay; but, being unable to prefer any positive charges against the latter, he could not induce the constable to interfere with Imbert's movements. Bangs was too old a hand to be foiled by the imbecility of a subordinate; he, therefore, applied to the Mayor for authority to arrest the supposed forger. The Mayor, having heard all the circumstances of the case, took a different view of his duty from that of the constable, and gave orders that Imbert be detained for the night.

Bangs then returned to the hotel, with a constable in

"You shall pay dear for this," said Imbert, excitedly. "I will show you that a gentleman cannot be insulted with impunity."—Page 265.



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reserve, to come in when wanted, and asked Imbert to favor him with a private interview. Imbert consented, and they entered a private room. Bangs opened the conversation by inquiring after Monsieur Imbert's health.

"I am in excellent health," replied Imbert; "but you have the advantage of me. May I inquire your name?"

"I am not at liberty to disclose my name just at present," said Bangs; "but I am an agent of E. W. Clarke & Bro., of St. Louis, and have come to make inquiries about that bill for two thousand eight hundred pounds sterling, that you sold them."

At this, Imbert raised his hands, as if in utter astonishment, and said:

"The bill for two thousand eight hundred pounds sterling that I sold to Clarke & Bro.! Why, my dear sir, I have not the pleasure of knowing the gentlemen. You have probably made a mistake in the person. It is quite one good joke, I assure you."

"Mr. Imbert," said Bangs, "there is no use in trying to beat 'round the bush. I know you and your operations thoroughly. The best thing you can do is to make a clean breast of it, and compromise the matter with Clarke & Bro."

"You have made one great mistake, sir," Imbert retorted, sharply. "I know nothing of what you say."

"Then, sir," replied Bangs, "I will give you an opportunity to refresh your memory. There is a constable outside, ready to arrest you. I will see you in the morning, and I trust, by that time, that you will have come to your senses."

"You shall pay dear for this," said Imbert, excitedly.

"I will show you that a gentleman cannot be insulted with impunity."

Bangs, finding that nothing could be done for the time being, called in the constable, and Imbert was taken to jail. An inventory of his effects was made, and they were found to consist of fifteen dollars in money, a small memorandum book, and a letter, dated September 4, 1855. This letter was signed M. Dutton, and was enclosed in an envelope addressed to J. Imbert, Esq., North American Hotel. In the morning, Bangs visited Imbert in jail. Bangs pretended to know much more of Imbert's operations than he really did know, and Imbert finally agreed to go to New York quietly, in order to compromise with Clark & Bro.

I had instructed Bangs that the case was being investigated in the interests of Clark & Bro., and that his first duty was to save them from loss. Imbert's operations in Canada had been very suspicious, and it was possible that he might be arrested at any moment by the Canadian authorities; in which case, Clark & Bro. probably would not recover anything. Hence, Bangs was desirous of taking Imbert to New York quietly, without having recourse to the extradition treaty.

Imbert, on his part, was induced to accept Bangs' proposition by the fact, that he found himself in a tight place; and, of the two evils, he preferred the one which offered the best chance of escape. He knew, from what Bangs had told him, that his operations in Canada had been discovered, and that he was liable to be arrested and brought to trial in Canada, where a long term of imprisonment would follow his conviction. Whereas,

New York June 7th 1856.

£ 2,000

John Mathes ^{and} son
Sons & Co. (unpaid) pay this first of exchange,
second and third unpaid, to the order of
James Alexander Day, sum of
Twenty thousand Eight hundred Pounds Sterling
Value received, and charge to account of /
To Mr. Charles' ^{and} Son
London Augt.
15437



The genuine first of Exchange,
Belmont Bill.

New York June 7th 1856.

John Mathes ^{and} son
Sons & Co. (unpaid) pay this first of exchange,
second and third unpaid, to the order of
James Alexander Day, sum of
Twenty thousand Eight hundred Pounds Sterling
Value received, and charge to account of /
To Mr. Charles' ^{and} Son
London Augt.
15437



The altered first of Exchange,
Belmont Bill.--Page 268.

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Clark & Bro., having a large amount at stake, would be willing to let the matter drop, on receiving back the amount of the bill and their expenses. He was, of course, unaware of the action taken to stop the payment of the Swift bills, and it was upon the proceeds of those bills that he relied, to enable him to satisfy Clark & Bro.

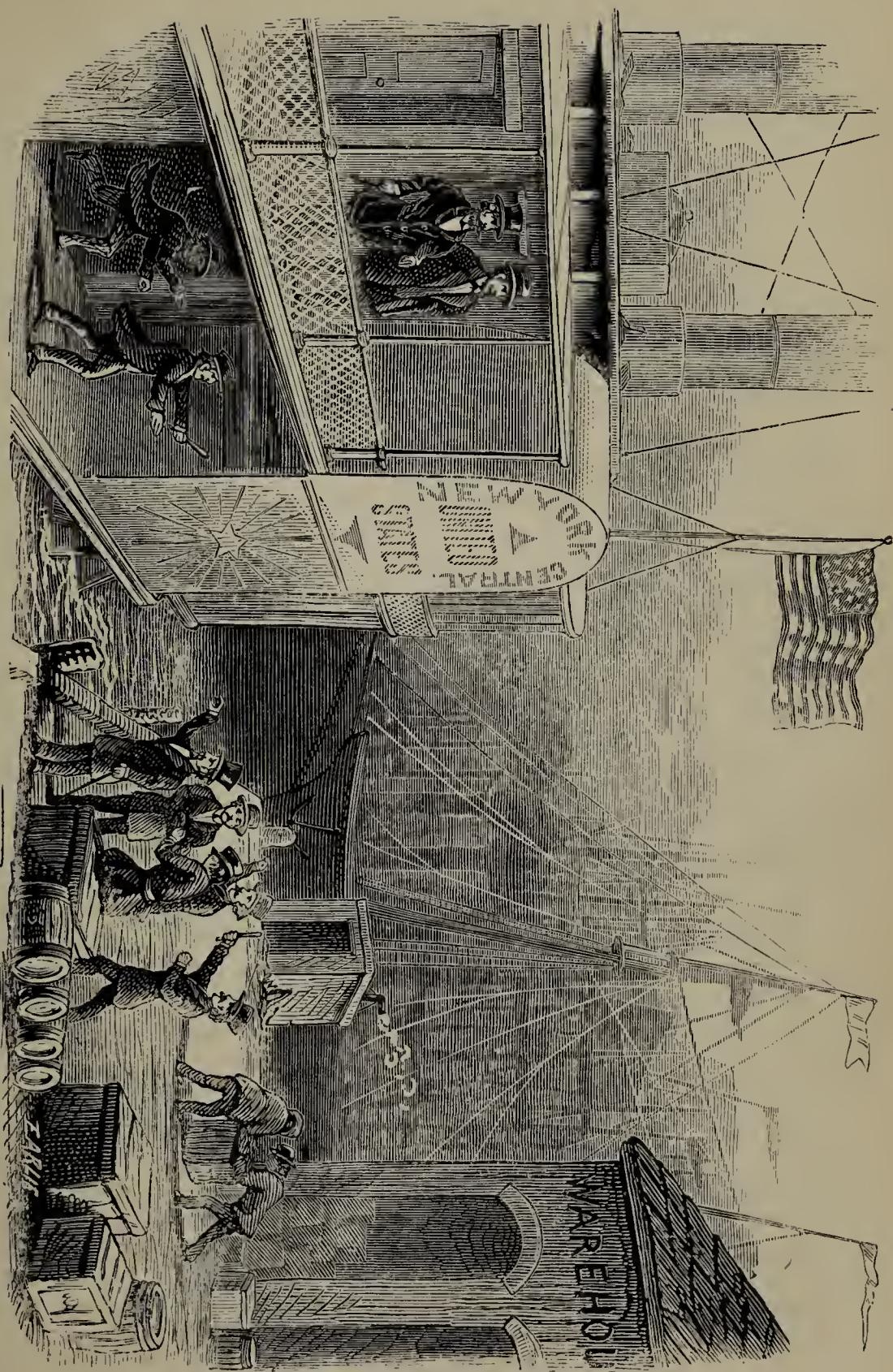
In the course of the conversation, Imbert stated that he had turned over the six bills bought of Swift, to Mouline Dutton; that the latter had forwarded three of them to London for collection; that he had sent one to Chapman & Co.; and that he still retained two in his possession. He added that Dutton, who was at Coburg, only seven miles from Port Hope, would willingly give up the bills and proceeds, to assist him—Imbert—in making reparation.

CHAPTER VI.

IN this long interview, Bangs showed great skill in drawing out all the particulars of the swindle, and the manner of manipulating the Belmont bill. The bill having been made out in *four parts*, Imbert had retained the first three parts, and had sent the fourth to London for collection. The three parts had been made out on the printed form of a regular three-part bill, on one sheet, the fourth part being an odd one. There being no printed forms for a four-part bill, (such bills being rarely, if ever, needed,) the clerk had used a three-part blank, writing the words, "and fourth," between the lines, and forgetting to erase the word "and," in the phrase, "second and third." By drawing a heavy black line over the words, "and fourth," the bill was changed into an ordinary three-part one; as the black line, being drawn between the printed lines, did not mar the appearance of the bill.

Imbert gave, also, a very full description of Mouline Dutton, whose mother's name was DeLorge. The proceeds of the bills sent to England were to be forwarded by mail to Adrian DeLorge, a name assumed by Dutton for the occasion, at Quebec. As Imbert expressed a desire to find Dutton, Bangs induced the authorities to put Imbert in his charge, and went with him to Coburg. Still, no trace of the mythical Mouline Dutton could be found,

The steamer was an American craft, and she had just pushed off from Canadian soil, hence, she was not amenable to Canadian laws, and the disappointed party of amateur detectives were forced to jump ashore in great haste.—Page 269.



nor any evidence that he had ever been in the town. Bangs, therefore, decided to start at once for New York; and that day the detective and his voluntary prisoner took passage on a steamer, to cross Lake Ontario.

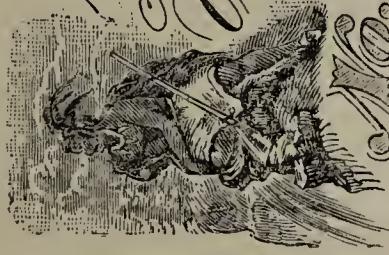
He was not a moment too soon. I had warned Chapman & Co. of the suspicious character of the man, Gay, who had purchased the Swift bills, and on examining the one sent them for negotiation, they thought they discovered evidences of forgery. They, therefore, advised all their correspondents in Canada to be on their guard against buying any of those bills. The movements of Bangs at Port Hope and Coburg, had become known, and that very afternoon, a dispatch had been sent to Coburg, to arrest Dutton. A consultation was, therefore, held by some of the Coburghers, as to the propriety of arresting Imbert, on the suspicion that he was Dutton; while the consultation was still in progress, the steamer came in, and Bangs hurried his prisoner aboard. As the steamer cast off from the dock, it was decided to arrest Imbert, and the party rushed on board for that purpose; but it was too late. The steamer was an American craft, and she had just pushed off from Canadian soil; hence, she was not amenable to Canadian laws, and the disappointed party of amateur detectives were forced to jump ashore, in great haste.

I need scarcely add that this escape was one of the luckiest things that could have happened, since, had Imbert been arrested and tried in Canada, the Crown would have confiscated all his money. I was, therefore, particularly pleased at Bangs' discreet management, in getting Imbert into the United States quietly.

On Bangs' arrival in New York, he went to the office of Clarke, Dodge & Co., and informed them of the disclosures of Imbert, relative to the Belmont bill; also, of Imbert's offer, to give them an order for the proceeds of the three Swift bills, which he had forwarded to Claude Scott & Co., of London, for collection. To insure themselves against loss, Clarke, Dodge & Co. commenced a civil suit against Imbert, for the amount paid to him for the Belmont bill by the St. Louis branch of the house. Pending negotiations for the desired object, Imbert was confined in the Eldridge street jail, and a requisition was obtained from the Governor of Missouri, on which to take him to St. Louis, for trial on a criminal charge. Of this latter fact, however, he was kept in ignorance.

£ 19930

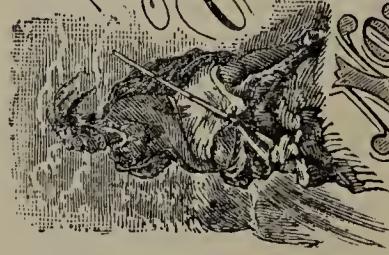
Chicago, All. C. August 3. A.D. 56.
Col three days sight, Pay to the
order of C. Moreline Dutton
Four hundred and ninety-eight pounds seven shillings sterling
Value received, and charge to account of
To London & Westminster Bank } R. K. Swift, R. K. Johnston
A.C. 19930 London, Eng.



ORIGINAL.

£ 19930

Chicago, All. C. August 3. A.D. 56.
Col three days sight, Pay to the
order of C. Moreline Dutton
Four hundred and ninety-eight pounds seven shillings sterling
Value received, and charge to account of
To London & Westminster Bank } R. K. Swift, R. K. Johnston
A.C. 19930 London, Eng.



DUPPLICATE.

R. K. Swift Bro. & Johnston's bill; the "original" of No. 19,931 altered to No. 19,930, and the genuine "duplicate" of No. 19,930.—Page 271.

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CHAPTER VII.

HAVING Imbert safely caged, I now turned my attention to the task of discovering his operations with the Swift bills; and my efforts in this direction led to the disclosure of one of the best-laid schemes of fraud that I have ever known. It will be remembered that Imbert, before purchasing the bills of exchange from R. K. Swift, Bro. & Johnston, had made inquiries as to the form in which they issued their bills. These were made out in two parts, which were *exactly similar*, except that the word, "Original," was printed in large, red letters upon one, and the word, "Duplicate," on the other. The manner in which Imbert altered these bills, was as ingenious as his operation with the Belmont bill. He bought six separate bills, paired off into series for equal amounts. Bill No. 19,930 consisted of two parts, original and duplicate, for £498 7s; bill No. 19,931, original and duplicate, was for a like amount. He then sent the original of No. 19,930, and the duplicate of No. 19,931, to England, for collection, retaining the duplicate of No. 19,930, and the original of No. 19,931. By simply changing the figure 1, at the end of the latter number, to a 0, he had a forged two-part bill that would defy detection. By changing the other series in the same manner, he had three full bills left to negotiate in this country; while he intended to collect, also, the total of the six bills, in England. But

Imbert was destined to learn that "the best-laid schemes of mice and men gang aft aglee."

It will be remembered that Mr. Swift could see no valid reason why he should not sell the bills asked for by Gay; yet he had an undefined suspicion that all was not right, which induced him to send for me. Though he endeavored not to show any sign of such a feeling to Imbert, the latter was aware, when he left the bank, that Mr. Swift was distrustful of something wrong. This accounted for the disguise assumed in traveling, and the secrecy of his movements. He did not imagine that Mr. Swift had suspected him to the extent of putting a detective upon his track; but he preferred to be on the safe side, and to hide his traces, in case of any future attempt to follow him. His instinct, as to the thoughts in the minds of other men, was so sensitive and accurate as to warn him against Swift; but his judgment, in acting upon the warning, was at fault. Had he proceeded, after leaving Swift's office, like an ordinary business man, engaged in honorable and legitimate enterprises, there would have been little or no reason to follow him up, or to investigate his previous actions; but the fact, that his movements were so suspicious, brought on the inquiries which exposed his schemes. It will thus be seen how rarely it is possible for criminals, no matter how able and experienced they may be, to act so as to escape detection; and, sometimes, as in this case, their most careful efforts to cover their tracks, are the very means of their discovery.

After receiving his bills from Swift, Imbert, as already stated, went to Canada, Webster following him as far as Hamilton. Thence, as was afterward learned, he went

to Port Hope, where he made his arrangements to personate Mouline Dutton, as well as Jules Imbert; and so successful was he, that it was not until a long time after his arrest, that his double identity was discovered.

On the second of September, he wrote to Chapman & Co., Montreal, enclosing apparently, the original and duplicate of the Swift bill, No. 19,935, for £349 1s 6d.; he requested them to negotiate it, and to forward the proceeds to him by a certificate of deposit on the Bank of Montreal. This letter he signed "M. Dutton." The request was unusual to Chapman & Co.; and, not knowing the endorser, they telegraphed to M. Dutton, at Port Hope, making an offer, and also to R. K. Swift, Bro. & Johnston, asking information about the bill. The operator at Port Hope replied that M. Dutton could not be found. This appeared suspicious to Chapman & Co.; and, on a close examination of the bill, they discovered the alteration in the number. My dispatches to them confirmed their suspicions, and they had the satisfaction of knowing that their prompt action had, not only saved themselves from loss, but had, doubtless, been the means of saving others.

On the second of September, also, Imbert wrote, under the name of Dutton, to W. R. McDonald, of Hamilton, and enclosed both parts of the altered Swift bill, No. 19,933, for £497 9s 6d. He requested McDonald to negotiate it, and to forward the proceeds to M. Dutton, by a certificate of deposit on the Bank of Montreal. McDonald, being over-anxious to do business, endorsed it himself and sold it to the Bank of British North America. The bank issued a certificate of deposit for

the amount, payable to M. Dutton, and sent it in a registered letter to him at Port Hope. Imbert took the letter from the post-office, signing the register M. Dutton, but he had not drawn the money at the time of his capture by Bangs. The bill was sent to England for collection, and, on the eighth of October, was returned unpaid, having been thrown out as an altered bill. On telegraphing to Port Hope for information, McDonald was informed that Dutton was a swindler, and that his accomplice was a prisoner in New York. Before this, however, Imbert had effected a sale of the certificate of deposit, through his attorney in New York, receiving for it about two thousand four hundred dollars and McDonald was, therefore, the loser of that amount. That gentleman had the altered bill framed and hung in his private office, to serve as a perpetual warning to him; much in the same way that many citizens of Chicago preserved their worthless insurance policies, after the great fire, as expensive relics of that event.

On the sixth of September, Imbert wrote a letter, signed M. Dutton, to Thomas Clarkson, of Toronto, enclosing the altered Swift bill, No. 19,930, for £498 7s; he asked them to negotiate the bill immediately, and forward the proceeds, by a certificate of deposit on one of the Toronto banks. Clarkson sold the bill the same day to the bank of Toronto, and remitted the amount to Dutton by a draft at three days sight, drawn on I. E. Welsh, of Port Hope, advising Dutton of the remittance by telegraph. Imbert took the letter containing the draft from the post-office on the tenth, but had not drawn the money at the time of his departure. On the eleventh,

Clarkson received warning from Chapman & Co. against buying exchange from Dutton. The advice was received too late to prevent the purchase, but in time to stop payment of the draft. Clarkson was thus barely saved from as great a loss as that of McDonald.

CHAPTER VIII.

I WILL now return to the account of the steps taken to save Clark & Bro., of St. Louis, from loss, and to bring Imbert to punishment.

Imbert made himself perfectly at home in the New York jail; he expressed his great readiness and ability to reimburse the St. Louis bankers for the amount paid them for the Belmont bill, and, also, their expenses; in all about fourteen thousand dollars. All he wished was to communicate with his *cher ami*, Mouline Dutton, when the amount would be forthcoming. He had brought himself to this frame of mind by the following reasoning:

He supposed that the six Swift bills, which he had forwarded to London for collection, had been cashed, and that the amount, about thirteen thousand dollars, was in Montreal, so tied up as to be available only to him. He had received about two thousand four hundred dollars cash on the bill sold to McDonald, and he held the draft obtained by Clarkson from the Bank of Toronto, for an equal amount. He expected to be able to compromise with Clarkson and McDonald for about two thousand dollars each, thus making the total amount necessary to compromise, about eighteen thousand dollars. His assets he figured as follows:

Cash	-----	\$2,400
Draft of Bank of Toronto on I. E. Welsh	-----	2,400
Six bills of R. K. Swift Bro. & Johnston	-----	13,000
Belmont bill, the fourth part of which he had forwarded for collection	-----	13,600
 Total	-----	\$31,400

Unfortunately for him, several circumstances of which he was unaware, had occurred, which quite overthrew his calculations. I had set the extensive resources of my establishment in operation, and I was determined not only to bring him to justice, but to save his victims from loss.

Accordingly, I arranged for the stoppage of all letters directed to any of his known aliases; and, on the twenty-fifth of September, I received a dispatch from Montreal, stating that a letter was in that post-office, addressed to Mouline Dutton, which apparently contained bills of exchange. The Canadian postal authorities, on representation of the facts, sent the letter to Clarke, Dodge & Co., who took possession of its contents. These proved to be the six genuine bills of R. K. Swift Bro. & Johnston, which Imbert had forwarded for collection to Claude Scott & Co., London. The latter-named firm, had presented the bills for payment; but, finding that payment on them had been stopped by Swift, Ransom & Co., they had sent the bill to Mouline Dutton, at Montreal. Clarke, Dodge & Co., having obtained possession of the six Swift bills and the cash found on Imbert's person, when searched in New York, were now ready to send him to St. Louis for trial. As before stated, he had sold, immediately on reaching New York, the certificate of deposit

in the Bank of British North America, sent him by McDonald, for about two thousand four hundred dollars, which amount was found in large notes carefully pasted between the leaves of an old novel. This sum, with the thirteen thousand dollars in the six Swift bills, made quite an ample offset for the thirteen thousand six hundred dollars paid by Clark & Bro., of St. Louis, for the Belmont bill.

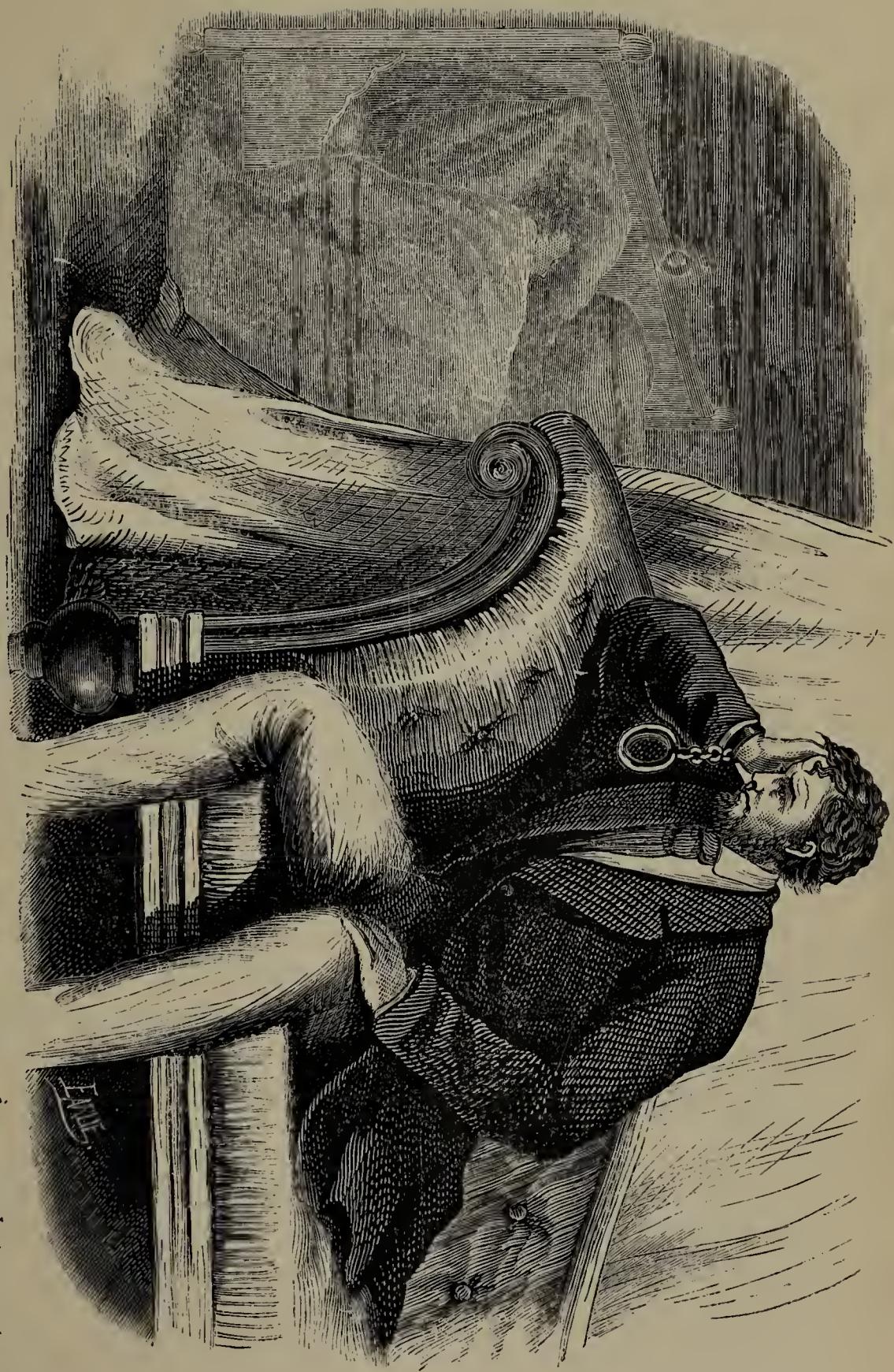
Bangs now presented the requisition of the Governor of Missouri, and Imbert was delivered into his custody, to be taken to St. Louis. Just previous to receiving the order, Bangs had been called to the bedside of his dying father in New York, and had become thoroughly tired out, through anxiety and watching. Nevertheless, he immediately started for Chicago with his prisoner, via the Hudson River and the New York Central Railroads. After leavin Albany, the cars rapidly filled with passengers and became quite crowded. Bangs and Imbert occupied a seat near the middle of the car, the former sitting next the aisle, with a handcuff on his right wrist and on Imbert's left. As night came on, Imbert, who had been very talkative during the first part of the journey, began to show signs of fatigue, and, at length, he fell sound asleep. Bangs, also, began to feel the effect of his long series of night-watches, and several times caught himself nodding; but he resolutely shook off the feeling of drowsiness, remembering my strict orders against sleeping, while traveling with a prisoner. Gradually, however, he allowed pleasing fancies to slip into his mind, of the credit he would gain from the public for his skill in detecting Imbert's extensive schemes; of the

reception "the boys" would give him on arriving in Chicago with his famous prisoner; and of the approbation of his chief, who would say: "Well done, my man; the fidelity with which you have executed my orders shall not go unrewarded." A feeling of honest pride came over him—his head drooped lower, and, in a few moments, for the first and only time, the detective was asleep on duty.

A quick jerk of the train awakened him. Springing to his feet, he saw at a glance that his prisoner was gone. He knew that only a few minutes could have elapsed since he lost consciousness, and he rushed through the train, scanning every face, until he found the conductor. He had satisfied himself that Imbert was no longer on the train, and the conductor informed him that they had made no stop, since leaving a station where Bangs knew he had been awake, with Imbert safe beside him. There were a number of switch-tracks at the little town of Fonda, however, where the train was obliged to run slowly, in order to pass in safety, and it was possible that Imbert had jumped off at that point. On returning to the car where he had been sitting, Bangs was told by one of the passengers, that his companion—Imbert—had climbed out over the seat in front, in a very considerate manner, as if anxious not to disturb Bangs' nap, and had jumped off at Fonda. Bangs was now in a state of such mental distress, at the thought of having allowed a prisoner to escape, by his carelessness, that he forgot all his bodily fatigue; and he determined not to return to Chicago until he had recaptured Imbert. Accordingly, at the next station, he took a freight train back to Fonda, and arrived

there at about ten o'clock at night. He routed out two constables, and made as thorough a search as was possible, all over the town, wherever it was likely that a person could conceal himself; but no trace of Imbert could be found, nor had any one seen him jump from the train.

At two o'clock in the morning, being completely exhausted, Bangs gave up the search, for a time, and went to the principal hotel to await daylight, when he proposed to get horses and scour the country. At the hotel, he was told that all the rooms were taken, but that if he did not object to sleeping with a stranger, he could occupy a bed with a gentleman who had arrived that evening. Bangs was too tired to mind sleeping with any one, and he was shown immediately to his room. On entering the room, he threw himself upon a sofa, and gave himself up to bitter reflections. As he did so, he noticed the handcuffs hanging to his wrist. In his excitement, he had forgotten to remove them. Ah! what a source of sorrow that vacant cuff had been to him! The more he thought about it, the more angry he became. His nature rebelled at the thought of having been outwitted so easily by a foreigner; he now saw that Imbert's vivacity at first, and his assumed slumber, subsequently, were parts of a cunning plan of escape. But regrets were useless, and he prepared to retire, hoping to capture his man in the morning. His principal fear was, that Imbert had concealed himself on the same freight train by which Bangs had returned to Fonda; in which case, Imbert would be safe in the crowd at Albany before morning. Just before blowing out his candle, which only feebly lighted up the room, Bangs turned down the clothes which partly covered his bed-fellow's face; he then dis-



As he did so, he noticed the handcuffs hanging to his wrist. . . . Ah! what a source of sorrow that vacant cuff had been to him.—Page 280.

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covered, to his intense delight, that the person before him was Imbert, the picture of sleeping innocence, without a shade of care on his amiable face. Bangs locked the door, hid the key, secured the window, and slipped softly into bed to await Imbert's awakening. Shortly after day-break, Imbert stretched, yawned a few times, and sitting bolt upright, gazed down at Bangs, who lay beside him with his eyes wide open. It would be impossible to describe the expression on Imbert's face as he looked at Bangs. He had gone to the most public place in town, on jumping from the train, rightly judging that no one would think of looking for him there; and now, to find himself still under Bangs' charge, made him actually speechless for a moment. At length, he broke out:

“My gar, Mr. Bangs, where in h—l you come from?”

Bangs said that he had come to escort his prisoner to the place last-mentioned; and he then proceeded to deliver a short lecture on the uselessness of any Frenchman trying to outwit a Yankee.

“Now,” said he, “Mr. Imbert, when I saw you trying to loosen your hand from the hand-cuff, I determined to feign sleep, just to see what you would do. You slipped off the hand-cuff, climbed over the seat in front, and went out upon the platform. As you jumped off on one side, I jumped off on the other; I then followed you to the hotel and requested the landlord to give me the same room as yourself. I hope this little frolic will teach you that *it is impossible to escape from a Pinkerton detective.*”

As Bangs finished his remarks, Imbert threw himself back in the bed, saying:

“I give it up. I won’t try it again.”

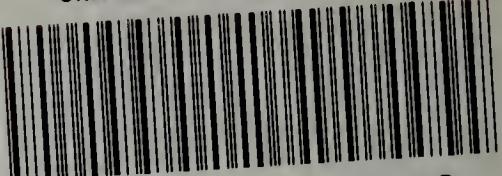
The journey to Chicago was made without further incident. On arriving here, Imbert called to see me; and, having learned that all his schemes had been discovered, he complimented me very highly upon my skill and forethought as a detective. He expressed great admiration for the plans laid to circumvent him, quite as unconcernedly as if he were an entirely disinterested party. He was also taken to visit Mr. Swift, to whom he politely renewed the assurance of his distinguished consideration. In reply to the question, whether he did not feel ashamed of himself, after having been detected in such enormous swindles, he said :

“ Oh ! no ; I did not cheat on the bills—I only furnished the bankers the means to cheat each other.”

He was taken to St. Louis the next day. He had a hearing upon the charge of forgery, on the twenty-sixth of October, when he was held for trial in default of ten thousand dollars bail. At his final trial, he was found guilty, and was sentenced to imprisonment in the State’s prison, at hard labor, for ten years. He wrote me several letters while in prison, and made strenuous efforts to obtain his release ; but they all proved unavailing, and he died at the end of the eighth year of his confinement.

Thus ended, in disgrace, the career of a man of large abilities and more than ordinary advantages. He commenced his downward career as a smuggler, in order to increase his gains, and the detection of this violation of law drove him to even lower depths of crime. It is a universal law, that crime breeds crime ; and no man, on taking the first step, can possibly know where his future paths will lead him.

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